




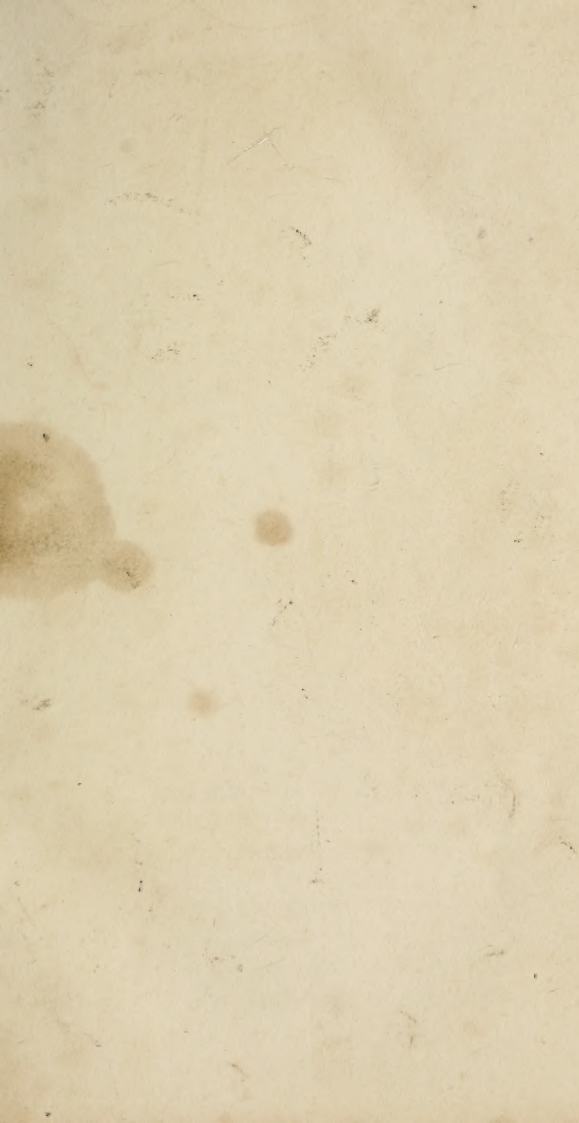
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“When he beheld Mrs. Fitzallan in all the fulness of maternal affection hastening towards the Carriage.”

FITZALLAN

BY A BLUE.

NO. I.



She concealed herself in an adjoining Copse until Fitzallan had taken his departure. His stay at the Cottage was but for a few minutes, and having shaken an elderly Female cordially by the hand, he resumed his Steps towards the Town.

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EXORDIUM.

"WELL! Robert," said his grandmother, seated in her black velveteen arm-chair, and laying down on the table a roll of manuscript, at the same time taking off her spectacles, "I have read this novel of FITZALLAN, and I much fear that it will not be palatable to some appetites."

"Perhaps upon the same principle," said Robert, "that few relish the taste of physic."

"As to the general view which you take of human nature," said the grandmother, "I will not pretend to call into question the truth of your observations, at the same time I cannot but confess that there is sometimes too much of the misanthrope in them."

"It has been my fate," said Robert, "through a life distinguished by extraordinary events, to be thrown into the society of a peculiar class of individuals, as well as to have enjoyed frequent opportunities of observing others, when the innate character of the man displayed itself, as it were, against his will, with all its deformities and its deficiencies; and upon the same principle that a painter would be justly accused of drawing a false likeness, if he omitted the personal defects of the object before him, so

I, as a delineator of human character, would justly subject myself to the charge of ignorance or weakness of penetration, if I omitted to catch any of those darker shades which abound more or less in every human being."

"But according to your delineation," said the grandmother, "those dark shades so predominate as utterly to obscure all the bright ones, thereby imparting to the whole group a gloomy and repellent character apparently at variance with nature."

"There in one particular point," said Robert, "you are begging the question, for it is supposing that those bright shades exist at all; I hesitate not to affirm that some characters have come under my observation, in which there appeared to be a positive absence of all moral worth, and a direct negation of any of those amiable qualities, which constitute the charities of human life, and which are considered as the basis of mutual endearment. Individually speaking, I disavow all connexion with that school which pompously teaches the perfectibility of human nature, and which inculcates the gradual eradication of vice as an object attainable by human industry and talent."

"I will not prolong this discussion," said the grandmother, "but is it not rather a singular portrait which you draw, of a man of rank despising his dignity, and on every occasion casting a slur upon hereditary titles, as if he were one of the members of the French Chamber of Deputies?"

"I acknowledge," said Robert, "that it is a character rather bordering on the caricature, and one which is very

rare in the world, but I affirm that such a character has actually come under my observation, and I pride myself in giving notoriety to it, especially as the time is fast approaching, when a man will be estimated according to his virtues, and to the manner in which he fulfils the different relations of life, and not according to the title which he may have derived from his ancestors, the majority of whom have gained it, perhaps, by rapine, violence, and murder."

"But are you not thereby," said the grandmother, "breaking down one of the barriers of society, and undermining one of the corinthian pillars on which the constitution of the country is founded?"

"Granted," said Robert; "as society is at present constituted, I cannot expect to escape the sneers and indignation of the sticklers for the pre-eminence of aristocracy; but I may be allowed as an individual the right to question the benefit of it, and by comparing the condition and prosperity of other countries where the title of aristocracy is not known, with that of my own, where it forms an essential branch of the constitution, I am inclined to suspect, that were it eradicated altogether, the country would suffer very little by the change. My own reason tells me that all men are born alike, and if one man by his superior talents or virtues distinguishes himself above his compeers, let him reap the reward of his industry and his integrity; but to maintain the principle, that because the progenitor of a certain man a dozen centuries back was so indulgent as to give up his wife to his monarch, and in return to be mounted on the stilts of nobility, by virtue of which all his successors are to be invested

with the same dignity, and to enjoy powers and privileges above the honourable plebeian, is, in my eyes, bordering strongly on the ridiculous and the absurd. The descendants of Nell Gwynne, a common actress, and of Dolly Jordan, also a common actress, and *one of his majesty's servants*, are now, on account of the attachment of those Messalinas to royalty, or the attachment of royalty to them, seated in the highest legislative assembly of the nation, on the same bench with the representatives of a Howard, a Percy, a Marlborough, and a Nelson, at the same time that the country is not indebted to any of the offspring of Gwynne or Jordan for one great, one useful, or one patriotic action; on the contrary, a portion of the hard earnings of the labouring classes is wrung from them by the legalized robber, the tax-gatherer, for the splendid maintenance of royal illegitimacy. The principle of *fortis creantur fortibus* has not an inch of tenable ground to stand upon, on the contrary, history flatly contradicts it: the daughter of Addison was an imbecile, and the bastard brood of Richelieu, that scourge of Hanover, could be scarcely made to comprehend the difference between an adjective and a substantive. According to the present constitution of things, a man jumps unexpectedly into a title, or the title suddenly jumps upon him, without any previous preparation or education for the change, and not knowing how to deport himself under his newly-acquired honours, he looks like the chimney-sweeper on May-day, decked out in all his borrowed tinsel finery, but under the disguise are still distinctly seen the real occupation and character of the individual. I might, perhaps, be brought to endure this po-

tion of the farce, and to smother my contempt accordingly ; but when I behold one of these funguses of nobility becoming on a sudden one of the legislators of the kingdom, ignorant as a cockchafer of even the first principles of political knowledge, and scarcely able to define the difference between a monarchy and a republic, my reason then tells me, that hereditary rank, with its vested privileges, cannot be conducive to the interests of a state ; and that it is one of those excrescences on the body politic of a nation which ought to be lopped off."

" With these ideas operating on your mind," said the grandmother, " I am not in the least surprised at the sentiments which you have put into the mouth of one of your characters ; but I wish you had been more indulgent on another subject, and that is sectarianism."

" Of all subjects," said Robert, " the most fit for the lash of the satirist. The *Spiritual Quixote*, on account of the strong vein of its satirical humour, contributed more to check the progress of Methodism than if a St. Bartholomew massacre had been raised up against it. I consider, however, that every man has a right to choose his own religion, and that no man is amenable to another for the mode of faith which he may choose to adopt ; but when I see sectarianism the cause of family dissensions, and the destruction, as far as its influence can extend, of the happiness of social life, my feelings revolt against it ; and it then appears to me, that instead of religion becoming a blessing, it wears, comparatively speaking, the aspect of being a decided evil."

“ Can that ever be an evil,” asked the grandmother, “ which in its nature is divine and beautiful ? ”

“ By perversion and abuse,” answered Robert, “ there is not any thing, although naturally good, which cannot degenerate into an evil. The Christian religion, in its primitive nature, is simply beautiful and grand ; but it has been so disfigured by the different misconstructions which fanaticism and superstition have put upon it, that its original character is lost ; and instead of “ peace on earth and goodwill towards man ” being the visible result of the sublime doctrines of Christ, we behold a crowd of infuriated creatures, with a sword in one hand, and a blazing torch in the other, scouring the earth, and threatening destruction to all who will not hold the same faith as themselves. The thirty years’ war in Germany, in which its plains were deluged with blood, was nothing less than a struggle between human reason and the dominant power of an intolerant Church ; and in our own times of boasted refinement and mental illumination, we observe a spirit of sectarianism pervading all ranks of society ; and the degree of excellence which appertains to the character of any individual is not estimated so much by the virtuous and faithful manner in which he performs the different relations of life, as by the zeal which he displays in the support of his own peculiar mode of faith. The Mahometan quarrels with his neighbour for beginning his ablutions at the elbow, whilst he begins the ceremony at his fingers : on the same principle the bigoted Christian passes by his fellow-Christian with the scowl of scorn and contempt, because

he does not consider him one of the elect, or that he presumes so far to consult his own reason as to deny that one is three and three is one. Let us suppose, by way of illustration, a missionary of the Catholics and a missionary of the Calvinists meeting on the shores of New Zealand, with the same intent of preaching the truth and divine origin of the Christian religion to the benighted heathen: the former preaches that a bit of paste and a little wine, consecrated by the priest mumbling a few words over them, become immediately an actual part of the body and blood of the Divine Founder of the religion; the Calvinist, however, steps in, and says, "that it is no such thing; the Catholic has told you a falsehood; for you must believe me, when I tell you that the bread and wine are merely typical, and are meant solely to *represent* the body and blood of Christ; and, consequently, that the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation is manifestly false." Here then are two individuals preaching the same religion, and both differing in one of the essential principles of it. What is the heathen, in his darkness, to make of this? But it is similarly constituted with the sectarian pride of this country. The beautiful simplicity of the Christian religion is disfigured, and, in some instances, wholly effaced by the unrighteous endeavours of certain fanatics to establish a system of their own, pretended to be founded on their own ignorant construction of isolated passages of the Scriptures; and then, as Pope powerfully says, they

Deal damnation round the land,
On each they judge their foe.

An Irving has brought the Pentecost again upon the

earth ; let the idiot continue his ravings and his rantings ; but on such a fanatic the lash of the satirist cannot be applied too severely, at the same time that the philanthropic philosopher deploras that he lives in an era, when human reason is chained to the Juggernaut car of superstition and bigotry.

“ But,” said Robert, unrolling a part of the manuscript, and referring to a particular page, “ setting aristocracy and sectarianism aside, I did expect to be visited with your reprehension for the severity with which I speak of the crabbedness and acerbity of age, on passing its judgment on the follies and indiscretions of youth. It appears to me, that with some individuals, in proportion to the incapacity for the enjoyment of happiness the aversion increases to see it enjoyed by others. I know not a more exhilarating sight than to behold the grey locks of age shaking with laughter at juvenile playfulness : it is the parting light of a western sun beaming o’er a scene of bliss, beautifully bright for the moment, then gradually dying away in softness and in silence. It comes upon us like the echo of a voice that once was dear to us in other years, and we linger on its last accents, as bringing before us again those scenes in which we were most happy. Is not contented old age a pleasing sight ? ” asked Robert

His grandmother was asleep.

FITZALLAN.

CHAPTER I.

It's no in titles, nor in rank,
It's no in wealth like Lunnun bank,
 To purchase peace and rest ;
It's no in making muckle mair,
It's no in books, it's no in lear,
 To make us truly blest.
If happiness hae not her seat
 And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest. BURNS.

HECTOR FITZALLAN was the only son of a lady who pursued a retired and monastic course of life, on an estate at a small distance from the town of N. on the borders of Scotland. We forbear from prudential motives to mention the name of the town, in order that we may not subject ourselves to the charge of personalities ; but we will go so far as to pro-

nounce it to be in a part of the country, where all the imps of calumny have from time immemorial been known to congregate, and where the natives are far better versed in the affairs of other people than in their own—a case by no means rare wherever the human biped has domiciliated himself. The first appearance of this lady in the country had been attended by some very mysterious circumstances, and notwithstanding the curiosity of the surrounding neighbours, and especially of the elder branches of the female part of the community, no information whatever could be obtained of her former relations in life. As usual, conjecture was heaped upon conjecture, and, as is still more usually the case, every conjecture turned out to be false. Nevertheless, however, she was importuned by a multitude of questions, some of which were put to her in the most artful manner, and others under the guise of confidential intercourse, or an apparent wish to render her some essential service: still all was in vain; she did not seem disposed to give the slightest clue to the mystery which evidently enveloped all her proceedings, and the more she was goaded and tormented, the more she retired, like the snail, deeper within her shell. Of the past, she appeared to possess scarcely any recollection; and, indeed, she informed some of the most officious inquirers, that she had been drinking the waters of Lethe, and therefore any reminiscence of the past could be scarcely expected from her. This information was, however, wisely considered as some clue to her former history, and every map that could be procured was consulted to

find out the geographical situation of Lethe, which in the profundity of their learning they supposed to be some fashionable watering place; but the town of Lethe was not to be discovered, and therefore, according to their unanimous judgment, the lady had evidently imposed upon them with a fiction. In this emergency they applied to the minister of the parish, who informed them that Lethe, according to the ancient mythology, was one of the rivers of Hell, but this was literally an infernal puzzler: it made confusion worse confounded, for could it for a single moment be credited, that the lady had actually arrived from the kingdom of the Devil, to introduce some of the fashions of that place amongst them, and to contaminate them by its multitudinous vices? The very idea afflicted them all with a kind of St. Vitus's dance of abhorrence, and it was unanimously agreed, that under such circumstances, it were certainly most advisable to shun her society altogether; but, on the other hand, it was as unanimously agreed, that her opulence, her high display of fashion, her routs, her *petit soupers*, were matters which were not to be slightly looked over, considering that they counterbalanced a number of other little disagreeables, which their fastidiousness or prudery might have invented; and who that has taken a passing glance at the moving panorama of human life can doubt for a moment, that the society of an individual possessing such worldly benefits, even supposing that she deserved to be placed at the head of the titled demireps of the age, would not be courted with the same obsequiousness and servility as are evinced by

the humble aspirant for a place, when standing in the presence of his haughty patron? It must, however, be admitted, that in the little coteries which assembled in her own house, and which also assembled in the houses of others, not one of those who were present could on the following morning boast of having extracted from her a single incident of her previous condition of life.

By the neighbouring peasants she was characterised as a most eccentric woman ; by which it must be understood, that she ventured to deviate from the staid and formal routine of action of ordinary people, which, in other words, is saying, that she possessed a mind which dared to think for itself, without binding itself to the conceits and opinions of others : and as evidently some mystery was attached to her, it is not to be wondered at that, in the restricted circle in which she moved, all her acquaintance were knocking their heads together to find out who and what she was, and what possible reason could have induced a lady of her apparent fortune and pretensions to seclude herself from the notice of the world, and all the gratifications and amusements which that world could grant. That she had descended from the moon, or that she had ascended from the waters of Lethe, was by all deemed a most improbable case ; but that she had fallen amongst them in a most extraordinary manner was agreed to by all without a dissentient voice. It was also acknowledged that she exhibited a very high degree of refinement of manners, and that she still shone in all the glowing colours of youthful

beauty ; which circumstance in itself was creative of surprise, for, judging by themselves, they knew that female beauty very seldom loves to conceal itself, but that, on the contrary, it generally seizes on every possible occasion of effecting its fullest display, no matter under what circumstances that display is to be made. The general strain of her conversation was edifying in the highest degree, and there was that general condescension and politeness about her, which so strikingly distinguish those who have been bred in the higher circles ; she appeared also to be thoroughly skilled in that art so difficult to acquire, and which may be called one of the fundamentals of true politeness, namely, that of raising those whom she knew to be beneath her, to a level with herself. It did not, however, escape observation, that the cheerfulness which distinguished her, appeared to be more the result of complete self-possession, and a direct control over her feelings, than the immediate effusions of a heart naturally prone to gaiety and mirth ; and it was also remarked by some who pretended to surpass others in penetration, that the shade of a secret melancholy appeared at times to be spread over her beautiful countenance, and that if on such occasions some intrusive and curious gossip inquired of her why she appeared so dejected and low-spirited, she seemed on a sudden to rouse herself as if from a dream, and by a forced hilarity to convince the officious inquirer that she was labouring under a mistake.

She had not long resided in the country before some very eligible proposals of marriage were made

to her, as on her arrival in it, she had so far condescended to satisfy the curiosity of her neighbours, as to inform them that she was a widow, her husband having been drowned on his passage to America. She, however, pertinaciously refused every offer, with the assertion, that she could never resolve to bestow her hand upon another, as at the departure of her husband she had solemnly promised him, in the event of his death, never to marry again, but to live entirely for the education and protection of their only son. She further declared, that she was fully convinced that she never could expect to enjoy that degree of happiness with a second husband, which she had enjoyed with the first. "I have my particular whims," she would say; "I love my liberty, I feel myself now in a state of happy independence, and I am resolved to devote the remainder of my life to the education of my son."

There was, however, one particular circumstance amongst the many others that had excited the attention of her neighbours; and this was, that the rental of the estate on which she lived was by no means adequate to defray the expense of her establishment, and consequently she must have other resources at command of no inconsiderable amount. The furniture of her house was splendid; her establishment in regard to servants was numerous; indeed, far more numerous than coincided with the opinion of the gossips, on the score of utility and prudence. Her display of plate amounted to profusion; and several persons professing to know something of the ridiculous science of heraldry, that is, if such balderdash

be worthy of the name of a science, studied most minutely the quarterings of her escutcheon, with the hope of discovering some noble families to which she might be allied : but in one of the quarters stood the black spread eagle of Austria and Russia ; and could it be supposed that she was related to either of those imperial houses ? There were also three dragons in one quartering, and three mermaids in another ; but what other information could be extracted from these non-descripts than that heraldry teems with monsters, which are only created to tickle the vanity of fools and to frighten children ? From this quarter, and from these quarterings, therefore, no clue could be obtained to her progenitors, nor to her own condition in life. She appeared to be exceedingly partial to horticulture, and large sums of money were known to be expended in the purchase of rare exotics, and the culture of the choicest fruits. Here presented itself another field for the ingenuity of her neighbours, for they attempted to calculate to a fraction the sum which each pine that was cut in her hothouse must cost her ; and some carried their arithmetical calculations to such a clever nicety, as to determine, „ she cut an apple into quarters, how much each quarter stood her in before she ventured to partake of it.

Her mode of dress was what might be strictly styled fashionable, combined with an unusual display of taste and elegance, and therefore those who could not compete with her in those particulars, in the plenitude of their envy turned up their noses ; and the important discovery was then made, and bruited

at the tea-tables, that she could be nothing more nor less than the cast-off mistress of some opulent libertine, who, being surfeited with her charms, had sent her about her business with a handsome annual pension for her iniquity.

It was also a matter of wonder—but what is there that is not a matter of wonder if people be determined to make it so?—that every year she absented herself from her estate for about a month, but whither she went, they were as ignorant of, as they were of the winter domicile of the swallow which was then skimming over their heads. During this temporary absence the affairs of her household were managed by a steward, to whom, immediately after the departure of his mistress, a regular siege was laid, with the view of obtaining some information of the leading circumstances of his mistress's life; but the grey-headed seneschal either did not, or would not know any thing about them; and all that could be extracted from him was, "Perhaps it is so," or, "It may be so;" but they never could succeed in obtaining from him either a positive negative or affirmative. Not so, however, the worthy and trusty spouse of the steward. In the absence of her mistress, the good woman, as she supposed out of pure esteem for the excellence of her character and the respectability of her station, and for no other motive whatsoever, was frequently invited to partake of a cup of tea with Mrs. Tomkins or Mrs. Hipkins, an act of great condescension on the part of the inviters. But to what depth of meanness will not certain persons stoop to gratify an idle and a culpable curiosity

From this garrulous dame the information was obtained, that her mistress, in regard to the fulfilment of every moral duty, might be selected as a pattern for her sex ; to the poor her purse was ever open, and to the sick she never refused relief ; her son appeared to be the only object whom she loved on earth, and her whole mind appeared to be directed to the promotion of his happiness. “ Many times,” continued the communicative servant, “ when I have entered her apartment to consult her on domestic affairs, I have found her on her knees, and she would then rise suddenly up, and wipe the tears from her eyes. Sometimes I have found her door closed ; and then, in a broken voice, as if she had been overwhelmed in grief, she would bid me come again to her in an hour. About every three months she takes a journey ; and always on her arrival at the town of D—— a nobleman’s carriage is in waiting for her, in which she immediately continues her journey, and is brought back in the same carriage on the following day. She often stands, as if lost in thought, before a painting which hangs in her boudoir, which represents a young and handsome man, and which we consider to be the likeness of her deceased husband. She leads in general the complete life of a recluse, chiefly occupying herself with her son, whom, we believe, it is her intention to dedicate to the Church ; her reading is chiefly confined to elementary books and to treatises on practical devotion. At nine in the evening she always repairs to her private apartment, and we are then peremptorily interdicted from giving her the slightest interruption ; we have,

however, known her never to retire to bed during the whole of the night, but to sit by the bedside of her son, as if it were an object from which she could not tear herself."

That here were materials sufficient to feed the curiosity of the hearers cannot admit of a doubt: each construed them according to their own enlightened or depraved mode of thinking; some saw lurking beneath them a crime that dare not be revealed, whilst others saw a hypocritical display of virtue, which the guilty often assume to conceal from common observation the full extent of their black delinquency. One general conclusion was, however, arrived at; which was, that if they were in ignorance of the affairs of Mrs. Fitzallan previously to the communication of the steward's wife, they were not much the wiser at the termination of it.

On Hector Fitzallan attaining his sixth year, his mother provided a tutor for him; but, with the knowledge of the scandalizing spirit of the world, she selected for that purpose not only an elderly man, of rather a grave and saturnine disposition, but also one whose exterior was by no means calculated to instil into the female breast any other sentiments than those of respect and esteem; for of personal beauty, the Rev. Mr. Bode, the name of the tutor, was as deficient as one of the idols of the Sandwich islanders. He was, however, in his intrinsic character, a diamond in the rough; the exterior encrustation was rather unpleasant to the sight, but, internally, shone the splendour and brilliancy of the gem. It was, however, only in the higher depart-

ments of learning that the talents of Mr. Bode were to be exercised, as in the inferior branches the task of education was entirely executed by Mrs. Fitzallan herself.

“ Well,” said Mrs. Fitzallan one day to Mr. Bode, who had now been the instructor of her son for about a year, “ do you find that my son possesses any natural talents for the higher branches of learning ?”

“ I consider,” answered Mr. Bode, “ that Hector is a youth from whom much may be expected ; and I am convinced that he will one day be an honour to his mother ; but will you allow me to ask, to what particular profession you mean to devote your son ?”

“ I consider,” said Mrs. Fitzallan, “ that every individual should have the privilege of choosing his own pursuit in life, according to the genius which prompts him, and the delight which he experiences in the exercise of it. All force and restraint only tend to the destruction, or at least to a wrong application of the glorious gifts of nature, which I consider to be like a river, that so long as it is allowed to flow in its natural channel, dispenses fertility and plenty, but if once diverted from its track, commits havoc and destruction. There is, however, one condition in life in which the most highly-gifted mind can employ itself in a manner productive of the utmost possible profit and advantage, and in which the heart meets with so many opportunities of amendment and improvement. It is to that condition that I mean to devote my son.”

“ And may I ask,” said Mr. Bode, “ what that

condition is of which you speak in such terms of high eulogium?"

"It is no other," answered Mrs. Fitzallan, "than that of a member of the Church of Christ."

Mr. Bode was rather surprised at this resolution of the lady. It was incomprehensible to him how a mother, whom he considered to be highly affluent, could devote her son to a profession, which, in the eyes of the world, promises to the majority of its members so little splendour and enjoyment; and which, generally speaking, furnishes them with such moderate means of support.* "I do not consider," he said, "that you would be rendering your son a service by attaching him to a profession, the basis of which is self-denial, and which is otherwise attended with exercises of a most trying character. His prospects in life, his talents, his property, justify him in the hope of being one day enabled to play a more distinguished part on the great theatre of the world."

"How!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzallan, "can you entertain so degrading an opinion of your own profession? In my estimation, there is no profession in any state in which so much utility, honour, and respectability are combined as in that of the profession of a minister. I attach no value to the mere opinion of the world, for much is despised and condemned by

* The author, be it understood, is here speaking of the situation of things on the borders of Scotland. Matters may be different further southward; at least, he has reason to believe such to be the case, especially in the vicinity of Durham, York, Winchester, and Canterbury.

it, which is in reality highly deserving of our esteem and approbation; nor is it any argument with me, that there are many ministers who are a disgrace to the sacred cloth which they wear: the profession in itself still remains invested with the same honour and the same respectability as if those drawbacks did not exist. I cannot picture to myself a more flattering prospect in my future life than that in which I shall see my son a virtuous, moral, and estimable minister of Christ. What opportunities and leisure would he then enjoy of enriching his mind by the acquisition of useful knowledge! From how many snares and dangers will his innocence and virtue be protected, when he knows that he must regulate his life according to the doctrine which he preaches, and especially if he is to enjoy the respect and esteem of his parishioners! In short, my son shall be educated for the Church; and therefore as long as you are his tutor, let that be your aim and guide."

Mr. Bode refrained from offering any further opposition, and in secret he respected the plan which Mrs. Fitzallan had laid down for the education of her son; indeed, in his estimation, the worthy mother appeared in the character of a genuine pietist, for she seized almost every opportunity of conversing with him on the simple as well as on the abstract truths of religion; and the able manner in which she treated the different subjects, proved to him that the mind of Mrs. Fitzallan was cast in no common mould, and that her powers of reasoning were in fact far superior to his own.

Mrs. Fitzallan often in the presence of Mr. Bode

spoke to her son of his deceased father, and extolled him as an excellent and a highly honourable man, but she often found herself embarrassed by that natural shrewdness which is so often perceptible in youth and which never displays itself with greater force than when the affections of the heart are engaged. "Why," asked Hector, "did my father go to America and not remain with you, especially when he must have been aware of the dangers attending a voyage to that country? Why did he separate himself from you, seeing that he loved you so tenderly; and why did he not take you with him?"

Mrs. Fitzallan hesitated for some time as to the answers which she should give, for it was evident that she feared to commit herself by an inadvertent one, which might give rise to further explanation, and only tend to increase her embarrassment. She therefore merely replied, that her husband went to claim the property of a rich relation who died in Philadelphia; "and most willingly," she added, "would I have accompanied him, but it was his wish that I should remain at home, to be your guardian and protector. Had I not in this respect conformed to his wishes, you would now stand in the world as an unprotected orphan."

"Have you then received the money from America?" asked Hector.

"Most certainly," answered his mother, "or we should not be able to live in our present style."

"Well," said Hector, in the fulness of his simplicity, "I would rather have had my father than the money;—would not you, mother?"

An involuntary tear started into the eye of Mrs. Fitzallan, but she seemed to struggle against the force of her rising emotions, and she broke off the discourse by proposing a ride to the neighbouring town.

The time flew rapidly away, undistinguished by any particular event calculated to arouse the dormant curiosity of the neighbouring gentry ; they had been literally tired out in exploring the mystery of Mrs. Fitzallan's situation, and finding themselves discomfited in every attempt, they very wisely desisted from renewing the attempt.

Mr. Bode now considered that the education of his pupil was completed as far as his own exertions were concerned, and it was consequently resolved that Hector should repair to one of the universities for the completion of his studies. The worthy preceptor who had fulfilled the important task intrusted to him with the most distinguished ability and fidelity, was now on the point of leaving a house, in which he had spent the happiest years of his life. He had no immediate prospect of obtaining another situation ; and one evening, as he was speaking to Mrs. Fitzallan of his approaching departure, she said, " My worthy friend, you have been a good and faithful preceptor to my son, and I know that he is attached to you with his whole heart ; I cannot consider myself therefore absolved from every obligation to you, or that I should suffer any opportunity to escape of evincing my gratitude towards you. I am, however, no stranger to the noble and liberal sentiments which influence your mind ; and with that knowledge I am

persuaded that any pecuniary remuneration would be rejected by you ; I therefore pray you, that you will continue in my service ; that you will accompany my son to the university, and continue to be his guide and friend, assisting him as far as you are able in the higher departments of learning which will now occupy his mind."

Mr. Bode most willingly and gratefully accepted the offer ; and Hector, who felt severely the approaching separation from his mother, was rejoiced to hear that the worthy and truly-respected preceptor was to accompany him. The hour of departure arrived, and with eyes streaming with tears, Mrs. Fitzallan bade her only child adieu. A dark and gloomy presentiment filled her mind, that his path through life was one not to be strewn with flowers, and that at every turn and winding of it some hidden foe was to burst upon him—the destroyer of his happiness, the tempter of his innocence and his virtue. She knew the world from experience ; and although the maxim may in some instances be true,—that the world is that which we ourselves make it to be, yet her mind was not wholly free from a belief in destiny, and that the free agency of man was incompetent to avert the accomplishment of its decrees.

Mrs. Fitzallan continued to receive from Mr. Bode the most flattering accounts of the progress of her son in every branch of learning, and of his apparently inflexible adherence to the principles of virtue and religion. The holidays were now approaching, and Mrs. Fitzallan despatched a letter to her son, inviting him and his preceptor to spend them with her. With

inexpressible joy Hector saw the morning break on which he was to commence his journey to his much-loved home, where the caresses of an affectionate and indulgent mother awaited him. The evening previously to his departure, Hector was agreeably surprised by the arrival of Philip, the faithful coachman of his mother, who had brought the carriage for his accommodation ; for to the youthful heart there is something delightfully pleasing in the voice of an old domestic, grown grey perhaps in the service of the family, who has administered to our sports in our boyish days, who has fondled us on his knee, and who has assisted us out of all the little scrapes and embarrassments in which juvenile heedlessness so often involves us.

The morning of departure broke, and Hector and his preceptor seated themselves in the carriage. " We must not lose any time," said Philip, as he applied his whip to the horses, " for do you not know, master Hector, that to-day is your birth-day, and your mother has invited all the neighbouring gentry to a fête. She told me not to inform you of her plan, as it was her desire to give you pleasure by the surprise ; but I knew you would rejoice to hear it, and therefore I could not refrain telling you."

" Push on then," said Hector, to whom the distance now appeared greater than it really was, and every mile longer than the former.

They had proceeded about a dozen miles, when in passing through a wood, the forewheel of the carriage came so vioiently in contact with a large stone, that the axle-tree broke, and in the situation in which

they then were, no prospect of immediate assistance presented itself. Hector, impressed with the idea of the impossibility of reaching his mother's house in time for the fête, and thereby depriving her of the principal portion of her anticipated pleasure, began to blame the unskilfulness of Philip, and to express his surprise at his want of caution in not perceiving the stone, and thereby preventing the disastrous consequences which had ensued. There are few persons who like to have their abilities called in question in that particular department in which they fancy they excel. The hair of an Irving would bristle up with indignation, if his ability were questioned to inspire his hearers with the prophetic power of bellowing forth in an unknown tongue ; the Marquess of Londonderry would undoubtedly send us a challenge if we disputed his powers to make long speeches, with a superabundance of froth in them and no substance ; and young Bayley would send us to the Old Bailey, if we presumed to tell him that his amatory effusions were exceedingly vapid, and only calculated to please boarding-school misses, milliners' girls, and chambermaids : no wonder then that Philip, when his skill in driving was questioned, rudely answered, that if his young master were a few years older, he would not have made use of such language, for it could not be supposed that it could impart any satisfaction to him to have caused the present accident, and as to any premeditated design, it was wholly out of the question. Mr. Bode very judiciously interfered, and told Hector, that few persons ever accomplish any particular purpose without meeting with some dis-

aster. "Life," he said, "is nothing more than a tissue of accidents, only varying in their shade of gloom or brightness. Every thing is subject to change; and the sky which in the morning is without a spot, may before mid-day be enveloped in tempestuous clouds. It becomes every one to conform himself to his destiny, not knowing for what purpose it is ordained, nor the results to which it is likely to lead." Little did Mr. Bode suppose that his youthful pupil would be soon called upon to reduce those wise rules of experience to actual practice.

It was not without the greatest trouble that the carriage was drawn to the next village, where it was expected that the injury could be repaired; but those who have ever frequented a blacksmith's shop, whether in England or Scotland, especially in the latter, when some sheep's heads are to be singed for the purpose of enhancing the flavour of their broth, have generally found it to be the rendezvous of all the politicians and gossips of the place; and it follows as a natural consequence, that they who hear much, have also much to tell. Now it unfortunately happened, that at the very time when the carriage arrived before the door of the blacksmith's shop, the son of Vulcan was just then in the very heart of a long story, to which about half a dozen ploughmen and labourers were listening with open mouths and straining eyes, and no one but the youthful, inexperienced Hector could have supposed for a moment that because the axle-tree of his carriage was broken, the thread of so important a history as the blacksmith was then relating was also to be broken, and

merely for the purpose of enabling him to pursue his journey about an hour earlier. It was a very bizarre idea; but Hector, in the fulness of his simplicity, informed the blacksmith that it was his birth-day; also that his mother was to give a fête on the occasion, and therefore he was desirous that every expedition might be used, in order that he might arrive in time to partake of the festivities. But the blacksmith appeared to care no more for his birth-day and the festivities of the fête, than the Roman Catholic fanatic Simeon Stylites (who on account of his intolerance is supposed to be the progenitor of the Stylites of Brixton) did for the calf's head, which some shameless heretic dared to offer him on Good Friday. Finding, therefore, that neither expostulation nor persuasion had any influence on the blacksmith, Hector proceeded to try the all-powerful and seldom-failing efficacy of gold; but, *mirabile dictum*, this even failed; the blacksmith was approaching the catastrophe of his story, and to stop at that most interesting part of it could not, in his opinion, be rationally expected of him.

Mr. Bode now finding it impossible to produce any effect on the blacksmith, suggested the hiring of some vehicle, and proceeding to the next town, where a proper conveyance could be obtained. Any plan which had the slightest reference to expedition was eagerly embraced by Hector, and the advice of Mr Bode was adopted. It belongs to genius to devise a plan, and genius does indeed devise many plans, which are never put into execution. Genius devised the Thames Tunnel, but genius has stuck fast in the

middle ; we know a genius, a Yorkshire baronet, who invented a life-boat, and the first time it put to sea half of the crew were drowned : and this was in some respects the fate of the plan which the genius of Mr. Bode had devised. To propose the hiring of a vehicle is one thing, but whether there be any vehicle to hire is another ; or whether such vehicle after having been hired was in any way suitable to the purpose desired, is another point of serious consideration. After instituting numerous inquiries at every house in the village, a vehicle was certainly at length obtained, but woe to those who mounted it, if their bones were not firmly fixed in their sockets ; and in regard to the horse that was attached to it, (for it was determined that Philip should remain that night in the village, and bring the carriage after them on the following day,) it was, as far as skin and bone were concerned, a very near relation to Rosinante, the celebrated steed of that most incomparable of all knights-errant, Don Quixote. Nevertheless, it is surprising with what calmness and equanimity some people can accommodate themselves to existing circumstances, and look upon things with a placid and gratified look, which under any other aspect would be treated with indifference, if not with positive contempt. Thus Hector and his preceptor, who but half an hour ago would have treated the idea as preposterous, that they should be obliged to put up with the accommodation of a common cart of a common peasant, now mounted it with alacrity, laughing at the ludicrous figure which they exhibited, as well as at the grotesque appearance of the man who drove

them. It must be admitted that progress is the aim of every traveller, and although Hector and his tutor could not congratulate themselves that they were proceeding at the rate of an English stage-coach, but rather at the funereal pace of a German post-wagon through the sandy plains of Hanover, still they were making some little progress, and it was no little satisfaction to Hector when he thought that every step which their Rosinante took brought him nearer to his mother.

The travellers now entered a forest, in which they had not proceeded far, when they distinctly heard the cry of a man, evidently proceeding from the interior of the wood. "What is that?" asked Mr. Bode, addressing himself to the driver, "there are, I hope, no banditti in the forest." Hector felt rather alarmed, for he thought there was something ominous in the sound which he had heard. "Heaven forbid," replied the driver, "how should any banditti get into this forest? I have passed the whole of my life in the village, and I never knew but of one murder committed in it. I can point out to you the exact spot, for a stone cross is erected to perpetuate the dreadful deed."

The travellers now distinctly heard the noise of a carriage, which appeared to be approaching in an opposite direction to their own route, and their fears began to subside, as it was not probable that if there were any banditti in the forest, they would attack a mean vehicle like theirs, and suffer a valuable booty to escape, which the approaching carriage might afford them. The road was in this part exceedingly narrow, and it was necessary on the part of the

driver to use the utmost precaution in order to prevent the carriages coming into collision. Now it happened that this relative of Rosinante was one of that steady, regular, and consistent kind of brutes, which being accustomed to travel in a certain beaten track, like some certain human animals, feel no disposition to make any digression into a by-path, and consequently, notwithstanding the driver pulled most manfully at the rein, with the intention of allowing sufficient space for the approaching carriage to pass, yet all his exertions were in vain, and the wheels of the two carriages became in consequence entangled with each other. This, however, had no sooner happened, than Mr. Bode heard a voice in the carriage exclaiming, "It is he, it is he;" and a well-dressed gentleman immediately descended from the carriage, and addressing Mr. Bode, said, "Fate has brought us together in rather an extraordinary manner, and whether it be agreeable or not, chance has so ordained it, that we should become acquainted with each other. May I presume to inquire into the import of your journey, and whether you be the father of the youth who accompanies you?" Mr. Bode, although rather struck with the singularity of the question, hesitated not a moment to declare that he was merely the tutor of the youth, and not in the slightest degree related to him by birth.

"I am myself," said the stranger, "a Liverpool merchant, and am now travelling to meet my son, and I no sooner caught a glimpse of the young man, than I thought I recognised in him my son Charles.

I now, however, distinctly perceive that I have committed a mistake."

The pretended merchant now entered into conversation with Hector, and appeared to pay little or no attention to Mr. Bode. In the mean time, however, the carriages were disentangled, and ready to proceed in their respective routes, but there was something so strikingly singular in the conduct of the merchant, that Mr. Bode felt a secret wish to close an acquaintance which had been formed under such peculiar circumstances, and therefore ordered their driver to proceed without further delay. This was, however, opposed by the merchant, who invited Hector and his companion to partake of some refreshment which he carried with him in his carriage. The invitation was however refused, under the pretence that they had not a moment to lose, if they wished to reach the town of D——— before the night set in. The stranger was, however, so very pressing and importunate, and in the opinion of Hector there appeared so much real honesty and cordiality in his invitation, that the scruples of Mr. Bode were overcome, and the stranger proceeded to hand Hector into his carriage. Mr. Bode expected that the same politeness would be extended to himself, but to his great astonishment, the stranger immediately followed Hector, and without waiting to have the door closed, he cried out to the coachman, "Now gallop away as fast as you can." The whip was immediately applied to the horses, and they darted away, almost laying Mr. Bode prostrate

on the ground, who stood almost rivetted to the spot with astonishment, and scarcely sufficiently collected as to know whether he should consider the abduction of Hector as a mere joke, or as an act of the most atrocious aggression. He, however, in a short time recovered from his surprise, and in the urgency of the moment, ordered the peasant to turn his horse, and try to overtake the carriage. The peasant certainly hesitated not to fulfil one part of the order of Mr. Bode, which was to turn the head of his horse ; but as to the performance of the other part of it, viz. that of overtaking the carriage, his efforts were attended with the same degree of success as was enjoyed by the six hundred virgins of the renowned St. Ursula, who when they beheld their beloved mother and saint ascending into heaven, all began to jump as high as they could, expecting that they should be able to ascend with their corporeal frames, and overtake their blessed mother before her arrival at her place of destination. Mr. Bode soon perceived the inability of the peasant's horse to prosecute the pursuit, and therefore he began to consider whether he could not effect by his own human power, what the horse could not accomplish by its animal. He, therefore, descended from the vehicle, and pursued the carriage with all the agility of which he was possessed, but this attempt also proved abortive, for the carriage was soon lost from his view, and even the sound of its wheels soon died away at a distance.

Mr. Bode stood for some time like the traveller in the desert who has lost sight of the landmark, and

knows not which course to pursue to arrive at the destined point. He was fully aware of the unbounded affection which Mrs. Fitzallan entertained for her son, and that he should most probably place her life in imminent danger, were he to be the abrupt bearer of the disastrous event which had just occurred. Panting for breath, and exhausted with his endeavour to overtake the carriage, he was glad to find himself at the entrance of the village where he had left Philip with the broken carriage, as he was still animated by a faint hope that he should there hear some tidings of the fugitives, and recover the valuable prize which he had lost. In whatever light he viewed the business, the whole of it was to him a perfect enigma, and the most extraordinary feature of it appeared to be the indifference which Hector exhibited ; he did not seem to be impressed with any fear, nor to show the slightest ebullition of anger, but, on the contrary, he allowed himself to be carried off, as if it had been a matter which he expected, and the result of which was known to him.

Mr. Bode found Philip very comfortably seated in the public-house, with a jug of beer before him, and surrounded by half a dozen peasants, who were listening to one of Philip's marvellous stories—for Philip, be it known, considered himself a man of sense and information. He had travelled as far as the confines of Switzerland, he had seen the Alps at a distance, and he was therefore able to speak of their glaciers, and their tremendous precipices, and their torrents, and their avalanches ; and he had just informed his auditors of the enormous crocodiles

which he had actually seen in some of the rivers of the south, and of the extreme delicacy of their eggs, some of which he had eaten, when Mr. Bode presented himself at the door. St. Anthony himself could not have stared more wildly when he beheld the thousand virgins approaching him to lay siege to his chastity, than Philip did when Mr. Bode entered the room unaccompanied by Hector. "What is the matter?" exclaimed Philip; "where is my young master?" "How!" exclaimed Mr. Bode, with the full expectation of receiving a favourable answer, "did you not see him pass by in a carriage, driven at a furious rate?" "I have seen neither coach nor Hector," replied Philip with a smile, who now began to think that Mr. Bode was imposing on him by some fictitious story; but when Mr. Bode assured him that he was under great alarm for the safety of his valuable charge, and related to him the whole of the adventure, Philip answered with all the composure of a heart perfectly at ease, "Stop a little, Mr. Bode, our carriage is nearly repaired, we will depart instantly, and believe me, we shall find Hector with his mother. There is something very mysterious both about her and this young man, whom she calls her son—it is to me all a riddle, but time perhaps will solve it; in the mean time, however, I will venture to say that Hector is in good hands."

Full of anxiety, and pondering on the manner in which he should communicate the disastrous intelligence to Mrs. Fitzallan, he departed with Philip; and when they reached the spot where the unfortunate accident had happened, his heart beat audibly,

and he looked around him with the wary eye of fear, expecting every moment that some bandit, or hired assassin, would rush out of the forest, and make him the victim of his cruelty. In this, however, they were mistaken, for they arrived safely at the residence of Mrs. Fitzallan; but as the carriage was driving up the lawn in the front of the house, the tongue of Mr. Bode appeared to cleave to the roof of his mouth, and all his powers of speech to have left him, when he beheld Mrs. Fitzallan, in all the fullness of maternal affection, hastening towards the carriage, exclaiming, "Oh, my Hector! this tardy arrival of thine has embittered the whole happiness of the evening, to which I have looked forward with so much joy; the visitors have been long waiting for you. But where is my Hector?" perceiving that Mr. Bode was alone.

"It is with the greatest grief," said Mr. Bode, "that I must inform you that your son is not with me."

"Not with you!" repeated Mrs. Fitzallan. "Is he then so ill that he is obliged to remain at college, or are you the messenger of his death?"

Mr. Bode now related to Mrs. Fitzallan the whole of the adventure, and she sank on a sudden into a deep fit of musing. Recovering herself, she said to Mr. Bode, "Let not this adventure transpire amongst the visitors; for once we must have recourse to some feigned pretext for the absence of my son; we will say, that on account of a slight indisposition, which might be increased by travelling, he was not allowed to accompany you; and I also charge you, Mr. Bode, to

impose on Philip the same secrecy. It is my most positive desire that he makes not the slightest mention of the real cause of the absence of my son ; his situation depends on his silence. Forget not to inform Philip of such being my determination."

The surprise of Mr. Bode exceeded all bounds at the unexpected and extraordinary composure which Mrs. Fitzallan manifested on receipt of the disastrous intelligence, for he fully expected that his communication would plunge her into the most violent grief ; so far, however, from that taking place, she calmly desired Mr. Bode to accompany her for a few minutes to her boudoir, where having closed the door, she questioned him in an under tone, as if fearful of being overheard, respecting the form, figure, and dress of the gentleman, the colour of the horses, the arms on the carriage, and other similar particulars ; all of which Mr. Bode having answered to the best of his ability, she said, with the utmost composure of mind, " My only fear is, that the sudden shock may have had an injurious effect on the health of my son, but in other respects I am not under very great apprehension about him ; he is in good hands, and I hope to see him again in a few days. But I implore you, Mr. Bode, to preserve a close silence on the subject. I am now placed in that most embarrassing and trying situation, that I am compelled to allow you to read a few pages in the dark book of my destiny, and by exposing to you the singular circumstances in which I am placed, I hope I shall not be degraded in your estimation. My heart is guiltless, and although I may be conscious of having committed *one*

great error in my life, still my conscience upbraids me not for it, nor do I expect to be punished for it by the Almighty Judge of Heaven. Let us now join the company; betray me not, and remember that you left Hector behind you on account of illness."

Mrs. Fitzallan entered the apartment in which her guests were assembled with an evident dejection on her countenance. "The happiness which I anticipated in beholding my son to-day," she said, on entering, "is wholly destroyed. Mr. Bode has brought me the melancholy intelligence that he is indisposed; it is, however, some consolation to me to reflect that his life is not considered by any means to be in danger. It is nothing new to me to experience the frustration of my dearest hopes; for no cloudless day is destined to shine upon me; if the morning be bright, ere the sun has set I am wrapt in gloom and sadness. Let not, however, this circumstance," she added, "throw the least damp on the enjoyments of the evening;" and in a short time Mrs. Fitzallan was observed to regain her wonted hilarity, and appeared to attend to the comfort and mirth of her visitors with the same cheerful countenance as if her son had actually been present.

That this apathy or indifference of Mrs. Fitzallan could fail to attract the attention of some of the members of the community can only be supposed by those who never have had the misfortune to be included within the coteries of some country would-be fashionables, and who consequently are ignorant of all the petty jealousies, the malicious sneers, and the false constructions which are ge-

nerally put upon the actions of others, particularly if there be any appearance of a departure from that prudish mode of conduct which they have in their own minds established as the standard of propriety and decorum. Some of the company—that is, the waspish part of it, saw in this indifference of Mrs. Fitzallan a something so out of the common way, that they very sagaciously concluded, that there must be something very wonderful and very mysterious in her domestic relations; at all events it was the indication, which could not be disputed, of a senseless and unfeeling heart. Others, however, concluded more wisely, that although they had been concluding and concluding ever since Mrs. Fitzallan came into the country, yet they were just as far from arriving at any positive result, as they were at the moment when she dropped from the clouds amongst them, or emerged from the river of Lethe; and therefore they “merely made a note of it in their prief-book,” and left time to develope the remainder.

It was, however, surprising to observe the extraordinary attention which was on that evening paid to Mr. Bode. He appeared, notwithstanding his resemblance to a Sandwich idol, to be in uncommon request with the ladies; and he had no sooner satisfied the kind inquiries of one party, that the malady of Hector was not the small-pox, than he was called to another part of the room to allay the fears of some good, kind, and over-anxious souls, that the poor dear boy had not caught the measles, especially as it was a very bad time of the year to be afflicted with that malady. This point being settled, a third

party pounced upon him, expressing their sincerest hopes that Hector was not suffering under the scarlet fever, which was known to be raging in the town in which he was domiciliated : this, Mr. Bode assured them was not the case ; and he now hoped that he was free from any further importunity, but he had as yet only given the kind inquirers a negative. He was now unexpectedly called upon to give an affirmative by a grave, demure, and antiquated kind of a lady ; who, after having politely invited Mr. Bode to occupy a chair by her side, thus addressed him : “ I understand, sir, that the hooping cough is very prevalent in the college where the son of our worthy hostess resides ; pray may that be the malady with which he is afflicted ? ”

“ It is not, madam ; ” answered Mr. Bode.

“ Then, sir, will you be so kind as to inform me of the precise malady under which he is suffering ? ”

“ I believe, madam, ” answered Mr. Bode, prompted by the imp of mischief, “ that it is the cholera morbus. ”

“ Lackadaisy, ” said the lady, rising immediately from her seat ; “ poor fellow ! only think, it is the cholera morbus : ” and in two minutes afterwards there was scarcely an individual in the room, who did not carry home with them the important news—that Hector Fitzallan was lying dangerously ill of the cholera morbus.

The thoughts of Mr. Bode were, however, directed at this time to a very different object than either Hector or his cholera morbus. His mind was by no means in a suitable temper for the enjoyment of

the amusements which were offered to him, for his penetrating eye perceived that a violent struggle was carrying on internally in the heart of Mrs. Fitzallan, and that, notwithstanding all her efforts, she could not completely conceal the grief which afflicted her. Once he observed her retiring to an unoccupied part of the room, and draw her hand across her eyes, as if she were wiping away a tear; and it was evident, that although her heart might be at ease in regard to the personal safety of her son, yet that there were some circumstances connected with his absence which appeared to open some wounds which had been scarcely healed; it was also visible that she felt the pain the more severely, because there was no one to whom she could disclose it. It is not the grief that can be communicated that lacerates the heart; it is that secret gnawing sorrow which no eye dare see, which no tongue dare reveal, that, like a cankering worm, preys on the core of human life, robs the cheek of the bloom of health, and lays the victim prematurely in the grave.

It was not till after midnight that the company separated. Mrs. Fitzallan appeared to manifest an uncommon degree of reluctance to enter into any conversation with Mr. Bode: she kindly wished him good night, and retired to her apartment.

CHAPTER II.

I went and took my father's hand,
And look'd into his face,
And begg'd him not to turn away
His child from his embrace.
And so he kiss'd me when he saw
The tear of anguish start,
But all so coldly that it fell
Like ice upon my heart.

MR. BODE retired also to his bed-room, but he could not sleep; the events which had lately occurred had so distracted his mind, that sleep appeared to be banished from his eyes. The actions, and the whole conduct of Mrs. Fitzallan seemed to him to be accompanied with greater mystery than formerly, and his curiosity was raised to the highest pitch to hear from her own lips some elucidation of her conduct. This curiosity, however, did not spring from that mean and petty disposition, which distinguishes some people, to make themselves acquainted with the affairs of others, merely for the malicious gratification of hurrying from house to house to retail them with additions and exaggerations; but he was influenced by the hope, that if he were made privy to the situation in which she then stood, he might be of essential service to her in alleviating her fate, by the removal of those obstacles which particular, and, perhaps,

unforeseen circumstances might have thrown in the way of her happiness. He was, however, well aware of the extreme delicacy which ought to distinguish all his actions in a case of this kind, and therefore he determined to await the time when the flower would open of itself, rather than attempt to hasten it by any rude or untimely interference of his own. He, however, retired to rest with the full expectation that Mrs. Fitzallan would send for him early in the morning, and make him the confident of her secrets. But in this expectation he was most grievously disappointed, for at a very early hour a servant knocked at his door, informing him that he had a letter to deliver from his mistress, who had departed about an hour before for D ———, on a visit to her son, and that on her departure it was her positive injunction that Mr. Bode should remain in the house until her return.

This circumstance tended not a little to put the curiosity of Mr. Bode literally on the rack, for it was evident to him that the cause of Mrs. Fitzallan's departure was wholly fictitious, for she knew well that her son was not in D ———; he therefore rose hastily from his bed, and read the following letter :

“ I cannot conceal it from you that my Hector is the cause of my sudden departure from my residence. I expect, if my good genius be propitious to me, to return in about six weeks. Let the report be circulated that I am gone to visit my son, and let it be your endeavour to confirm it to every one who, in their officiousness, may think proper to inquire after me. ”

“ I have devoted a part of the night in fulfilling

the promise I made to you yesterday to impart to you some of the leading circumstances of my life. They will throw some light upon the mystery which appears to hang over my actions, and be sufficient to enable you to form a correct estimate of my character. The injury which you would inflict upon me were you to divulge any part of it would be irreparable, without it being productive of the slightest benefit to yourself. I regard you as a highly honourable man, incapable of a mean or degrading action, and therefore I can fearlessly and conscientiously confide in you. Attend to what I now impart to you, and destroy this letter as soon as you have read the last word of it.

“ It was not until I had attained my fourteenth year that my mother informed me that I was the illegitimate child of an affluent and highly respected nobleman. My mother herself was of noble blood, but she was discarded by her family in consequence of her connexion with my father. I have often found her overwhelmed in tears, and often has it been the occupation of my midnight hours to sit by her bed-side, and by my filial attentions assuage the grief which appeared at times too great for her constitution to support. She rejected every offer of marriage that was made to her, and which, on account of her beauty, were very numerous. On the death of my father, which took place when I was only three years old, we were left in a state of the greatest penury. His heirs refused us that support which my father had granted us during life, but which he had failed to secure to us according to the strict letter of the law. This omission was taken advantage of

by his heirs, and from a state of comparative affluence we were now reduced to one of positive poverty.

“ An uncle of the maternal side at last took compassion on me, and received me into his house, where by himself I was treated with the utmost kindness and affection ; but very different was the treatment I received from his wife. I appeared to be the object of her hatred. She had three daughters, with whom I associated as with a sister ; one of them had some pretensions to beauty, but the other two might literally be pronounced as amongst the ugliest of their sex. This circumstance was the foundation of that dislike which my aunt imbibed for me, for I was courted and admired by all the visitors who frequented the house, and it wounded her maternal pride to behold the distinguished preference which was so lavishly bestowed upon me. The most valuable gift, however, which I inherited from my mother was an understanding adorned and enriched with the most useful knowledge, and a heart noble and unsophisticated, but by nature, I confess, too susceptible. I was an enthusiast ; where I fixed my affections, that object was my all—my world : I saw naught beyond it ; I lived only in it and for it, and without it life appeared a desert bereft of a single flower to delight me. My skill in those accomplishments which render the female character so amiable and pleasing, was universally acknowledged to be great. In music and singing I was a proficient, and in my manners I was said to possess that free, affable, and unrestrained deportment which opens the way to every heart.

“ Perhaps too early for my happiness I became acquainted with a young man, whose name and station in life I must conceal. He avowed his love for me, and asked for mine in return. I acknowledge that his image had long been impressed on my heart, and in one of those moments which are the most blissful of human life, and which are remembered as the brightest spots of it even on the brink of the grave, I confessed what I felt for him, and one night, with no other witnesses than the stars of heaven, we swore eternal fidelity to each other. From that hour I maintained a secret epistolary correspondence with him, and we now and then saw each other. Still, however, I can say with conscious pride, that neither our correspondence nor our meetings were clandestine, they were both known to my cousins, and I will do them the justice to say, that they never betrayed the confidence which I reposed in them. Once he wrote to me as follows : ‘ I have not been able to persuade my parents to permit me to marry you, as it is their intention that I should give my hand to the rich heiress, the Countess of Frampton. I am most strictly prohibited from visiting you, and a thousand eyes are continually employed to watch my motions. My father threatens to disinherit me, if I do not renounce all intercourse with you, and conform immediately to his wishes. I cannot, however, obey the severe command—part from you I cannot. If your love be equal to mine, keep yourself in readiness to-morrow night. I will come and bear you off, where you can be made mine for ever. My father cannot deprive me of the estates

bequeathed to me by my grandfather, and their revenue will be more than sufficient to support us in a state of comfortable independence.'

"Those who have truly loved, and to those only do I appeal, will exculpate me for the step which I now took. I was ready at the appointed time ; he came, and we flew on the wings of love. Six weeks we lived in the cottage of a forester, concealed from the eye of every person, and where we fondly flattered ourselves we were safe from the pursuit of the father of my adored Henry. But oh ! what is man, when he has defoliated the sweet bud of innocence, when he has torn it from its stem to trample it under his foot. We were discovered, and, instigated by threats and promises, Henry was induced to return to the house of his father. Money was sent to me in superfluity at first, and I received letters full of protestations, and of his solemn promises that he would never marry another. By degrees, however, the letters came less frequently ; my future destiny stood clear before me : all was soon explained, for I heard that he had become the husband of the Countess of Frampton.

"I would not return to the house of my uncle, I could not endure to expose myself to the gaze of my former acquaintance. I felt the shame of my situation, but still my conscience stung me not. I had been deceived under all the flattering blandishments—under the almost irresistible influence of an ardent affection—of a first love, as chaste and pure in its origin, as if it had sprung in an angel's breast. Money was regularly and profusely sent to me ; my

pride at first induced me to refuse it, but it was sent in such a secret and private manner, that I was deprived of the means of returning it. All the exculpatory declarations with which Henry attempted to justify himself, extinguished not in my breast the remembrance of the crime which he had committed. I became a mother, and Hector was born.

“Two months after the birth of my son, a young and handsome stranger presented himself at the door of the cottage, and inquired for me. Shame, mingled with pride, induced me at first to refuse him admittance, but he requested the wife of the forester to deliver a letter to me. It was from Henry, and the bearer was his most intimate friend, whom he had sent to implore my pardon for the injury which he had done me. I admitted the stranger, and he used every effort in his power to reconcile me with my seducer, assuring me that it was the solemn intention of his friend, on the death of his father, who was then seriously indisposed, to obtain a divorce from his wife, with whom he lived very unhappily, and then it would be the greatest happiness of his life to make me his wife. He besought me in the most fervent manner to remain for some time at the cottage, as preparations were then making for procuring me a more suitable residence in a more pleasant part of the country, in which I should appear as a total stranger, and where, by a change of my name, I might for ever remain unknown.

“After the lapse of a few months, the stranger again visited me, bringing with him a most striking likeness of my Henry, and a letter couched in the

most affectionate terms. On looking at the portrait I could no longer command my feelings, and had not my tears come to my relief, I should have fallen on the ground. The letter informed me of the death of the father of Henry, and that he would immediately obtain a divorce if I would consent, without casting on him any reproaches or censures for his previous conduct, to bestow my hand upon him. The love, however, which I once bore for him had suffered some diminution, and I was resolved that I would not be made a party to his separation from his wife, nor did I believe that I could live with him with that respect and honour which became me, and I therefore took a solemn vow not to marry him.

“ I was removed to the residence which was provided for me, and where I passed under a different name to that which I now bear. In a short time Henry visited me, repeated his entreaties that I would marry him, but my resolution was not to be shaken. All that he could obtain from me was, that I would sit for my picture, which I did, and it was delivered into his hands.

“ In a few months his wife died in childbed, although the child survived, and he now hastened to me on the wings of love, and again offered me his hand, but it was in vain ; I had taken a vow, and I was determined not to infringe it. For how many unparalleled acts of disinterested kindness have I been since indebted to him ! Of how many benefits and comforts have I been in the enjoyment of, solely from the love which he bears for me ! He has received my unqualified forgiveness, and one, perhaps

the last kiss I shall ever imprint on his lips told him, that in my heart I still loved him. I now stand for hours before his picture, I speak to it as if it were a living thing, and in my whisperings I recall those hours which memory has hallowed, and which are all that are left to me to brighten the stormy scenes of my existence. I know not how to account for it, but there is a destiny which guides us, which forces us to march in a path which we are conscious will not conduct us to our happiness. It was this iron, this irresistible power which has stood between me and Henry. I might have rendered him happy by my love; I might in the endearments of an affectionate heart, overflowing with the purest affection, have made him forget all that had previously passed, and in the mellow autumn of our life, we might have smiled at the storms which assailed us in the spring.

“ His life now appeared to be hateful to him ; my obstinacy seemed to deprive him of all terrestrial happiness. He formed the resolution of visiting America, for the purpose of abstracting his mind from the scenes of his native country, and from those whom he in that country loved. I allowed him to depart broken-hearted, and authentic intelligence has been received of his death, but whether in the waves by some untoward accident, or in a paroxysm of despair by his own hand, I am left in ignorance.

“ The hour of my departure approaches ; I must away, if to-morrow I am to embrace my Hector ; I will therefore now close this letter. On my return I will inform you of the reason of the composure with which I

heard that a stranger had taken my son away in his carriage. Again, I enjoin you to secrecy, and it is my most earnest request that this letter may be destroyed."

Mr. Bode sat for some time with the letter in his hand, and thoughts of a very conflicting nature arose in his mind. He destroyed the letter according to the injunction of Mrs. Fitzallan, but some strong suspicions arose within him that some parts of its contents were not wholly conformable to truth; nevertheless, she had presented him with the clue, if it were at any time required, by which he could probe the secret to the bottom, without being the cause of the slightest injury to her own immediate interests. He vowed, as he regarded Mrs. Fitzallan as his benefactress, that he would never betray a word of the letter, and he honourably and faithfully fulfilled his vow to his death.

CHAPTER III.

I never heard
Of any true affection, but 'twas nipt
With care; that, like the caterpillar, eats
The leaves of the spring's sweetest book, the rose.

THE fears which Mrs. Fitzallan had expressed relative to the effect which the shock might have upon the mind of her son, were, in a great degree, but too fully realized. When the stranger called to the coachman in the wood to proceed at full gallop, Hector exclaimed, overcome with fright, "What are you doing? Whither are you taking me?" It however tended by no means to console him, when he was answered, that he must keep himself composed, if it were his wish that some very coercive measures should not be adopted towards him. Hector now made a motion as if he would leap out of the carriage, but he was forcibly withheld by his companion, who, in a threatening voice, said, "If you will not consent quietly to travel with me, and if you ever again attempt to make your escape, you will place me under the disagreeable necessity of firing this pistol at you," drawing at the same time a pistol from his pocket, and pointing it to the heart of Hector.

"But," said the youth, trembling with fear, "I have but little money with me, and that which I have will I freely give to you—only let me return with my tutor to my mother."

"Money is not my object," said the stranger; "I am not a robber; my only aim was to obtain possession of your person, and I have succeeded; you are now in my power. But, my dear boy, be not dismayed; not a hair of your head shall be injured; I am conducting you towards your future happiness, and the time is not far distant when you will not repent of having followed me."

"But how great will be my mother's grief," said Hector, "when Mr. Bode arrives without me."

"She will soon be consoled," said the stranger; "for she cannot be wholly ignorant that you will not be with her to-day."

"How is that possible?" asked Hector.

"I was yesterday with her," said the stranger, "and I informed her that I should proceed to meet you on the road. I know that to-day is your birthday, and that it was determined that you should attend the celebration of it at home."

The astonishment of Hector at this information was boundless; but any solution to the enigmatical expressions of the stranger, notwithstanding his great anxiety to obtain it, was obstinately refused him. "The time is not yet come," said the stranger, "for you to be made acquainted with all that you wish to know. When you have attained the age of manhood, then will many secrets be laid open before you which at present hang over your life, and then

only can the knowledge of them be of any use to you. But now compose yourself; trust in your present guide, whose intentions towards you are highly honourable and friendly. In a few days you will return to the arms of your mother. I am given to understand that your father is no longer living. Is that true?"

"You are perhaps able," said Hector, "to answer that question better than myself. According to the report of my mother he was drowned on his passage to America: my eyes never beheld him. But can I place any reliance on your words, that I shall be re-conducted to the arms of my mother?"

"As certain," said the stranger, "as that yonder sun now shines upon you."

"But then," asked Hector, "why had you recourse to these forcible measures? Could you not, if your intentions be as honourable as you represent them, have asked the permission of my mother to accompany you?"

"I cannot at present answer your question," said the stranger; "but be assured that the time is approaching when you will be able to answer those questions yourself. You have been at the college of ————," continued the stranger, "and are now studying theology; would it not be more agreeable to your own disposition if you were to apply yourself to the profession of a soldier?"

"It is my mother's wish," said Hector, "that I should be a minister; and I see no good grounds why I should act in opposition to her wishes. Am I not in duty bound to put a restraint upon any pur-

suit or inclination of my own, and thereby testify my obedience to so kind and affectionate a mother?"

"From that I am induced to believe," said the stranger, "that you really feel a stronger inclination for a military life than for the more tranquil and monotonous one of a pastor; if that be the case, I will use my influence with your mother to have your mode of education altered."

"*Your* influence!" repeated Hector. "May I presume to ask, how you come to possess any influence over my mother?"

This unexpected question appeared for a moment to discomfit the stranger; but he soon collected himself, and said, "That is a question which I do not think myself called upon at present to answer;" and he projected his head out of the window of the carriage, as if he were dubious of the road, or that he was in expectation of meeting some particular object of which he was in pursuit. On a sudden he called to the coachman to stop, and then addressing himself to Hector, said, "Here is a pleasant shady place; let us dismount and partake of some refreshment. Accordingly they descended from the carriage; the stranger still held the pistol in his hand, and he said to Hector, in a warning voice, "Mark me; if you attempt to escape, you will reduce me to the severe extremity of firing at you."

Hector assured him he would not attempt to escape; "but," he added, "I should be a most silly youth were I to entertain any fear of your pistol. I know to a certainty that you would not fire at me even were I to attempt to fly; for how could you

answer to God and your conscience for having taken away the life of an individual who never injured you, and who but an hour ago was a perfect stranger to you? Your murderous act would not long remain undiscovered, and your punishment in return would be an ignominious death on the scaffold. Neither my anxiety for my liberty, nor the excess of my filial affection can warrant you in the commission of so heinous a crime; and of a criminal act I defy you to prove me guilty. Therefore I will remain with you divested of all fear, but in return I expect that you will keep your word with me, and reconduct me to my mother. In the mean time, however, it would be highly gratifying to me, if during our repast you would disclose to me the plan which you have in agitation against me. I cannot believe your design to be bad, for I know not an individual whom I have injured in the world, and consequently that I should be the object of their revenge."

The stranger smiled at this speech of Hector, and placed his fingers on his lips, as if meaning to imply, that he dare not be more communicative than he had been. "If you be the youth," he said at last, "which you seem to be, I will ere long place my whole confidence in you." He then returned to the carriage, and placed the pistol in one of the pockets. "Now," said he, on joining Hector, "dismiss all fear, and partake of our wine and viands with a contented heart." Hector required not a second invitation, and he drank the glasses of wine which were offered to him with the greatest glee. It however struck him as a most suspicious circumstance, that

the stranger did not drink from the same bottle, and Hector said to him,

“Will you not take a glass of the same wine of which I have been drinking?”

“It is not a kind of wine,” said the stranger, “that suits my palate.”

“I do not recollect,” said Hector, “ever drinking wine of so sweet a flavour.”

“It is a wine,” said the stranger, “more fitted for youth than the intoxicating wine of which I am now drinking; but let us return to the carriage.”

They had not proceeded far when Hector perceived an unusual drowsiness stealing over him, and he complained to the stranger, that he knew not how to account for it, but he never felt before so strong an inclination to sleep.

“Sleep then, my boy,” said the stranger; “you are as safe with me as in the arms of your mother. I will watch over you, and protect you from harm.”

Hector was however convinced that this tendency to sleep was not natural; and the certainty now flashed upon him that some narcotic drug had been incorporated with the wine. The very suspicion aroused all his dormant fears, and he determined not to sleep; but notwithstanding all his endeavours to keep awake the drowsiness increased upon him every minute, and in a short time he fell fast asleep.

When he awoke all was dark around him; and, scarcely conscious of his actions, he uttered a loud scream, indicative of surprise and fear. A voice sounded from the adjoining room, “Be still, be still;

you have nothing to fear. In a short time refreshment and light shall be brought you."

Hector now perceived that he was on a bed ; but after waiting a considerable time, still no light was brought. He still felt an unusual lassitude about him, and had not his curiosity been strongly excited to ascertain the exact nature of the place in which he then was, he would most probably have reclined himself to sleep again. He rose from his bed and proceeded towards the window. The stars were still shining in the firmament, though in the east the first blush of day was breaking ; he opened the window, and he now distinctly perceived that his apartment was situate on the third story of a very large mansion : before him was spread an extensive yard, one side of which was occupied by barns and stables, and the whole enclosed by a wall too lofty for any one to surmount without a ladder. He distinctly heard the stamping of the horses in the stables, and the rattling of the chains of their halters ; and a sudden thought struck him, whether as soon as it was sufficiently light, he could not find his way into the yard, and mounting one of the fleetest horses, make his escape to the residence of his mother. Every thing he saw convinced him that he was in the residence of some nobleman, but still it was all a mystery to him for what possible cause he could have been brought to such a place, or in what manner his confinement could possess any influence in the affairs of those who had been the instruments of his caption.

He now distinctly heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and he hurried back to his bed. On a sudden the door opened, and a servant entered, greeting him with a friendly good morning. Having placed on a marble slab two wax lights in massy silver candlesticks, he inquired what kind of refreshment he could bring him. Hector preferred some coffee, but, in an anxious tone, he inquired, "Where am I?"

"As you will see when day breaks," answered the servant, "in the mansion of a nobleman; and what is still more, amongst your best and sincerest friends."

"But what is the name of the nobleman," asked Hector, "and what are his intentions towards me?"

No answer was returned to these questions. The servant abruptly turned his back, and left the room.

Hector now took a survey of the apartment. It was most splendidly furnished, and several paintings adorned the walls. He had just begun to dress himself when the servant returned, bringing the coffee with him.

"It is yet very early," said the servant; perhaps when you have taken some refreshment you will return to your bed, or shall I assist you in dressing yourself?"

"I cannot sleep," said Hector, "for my mind is in a state of distraction. Am I to be left here alone; and shall I not soon be made acquainted with my fate?"

"May I beg of you," said the servant, "not to

put any questions to me, for were it in my power to answer them, I am strictly enjoined not to do it."

"By whom is that injunction imposed on you?" asked Hector.

The servant left the room.

Hector seated himself at the table, and found himself considerably refreshed by his early breakfast. He rose from his seat and examined the different paintings, some of which excited his admiration on account of their extraordinary beauty. On a sudden he stood as if transfixed to the ground, for he saw a picture which bore the most striking resemblance to his mother, and at the bottom of which was written in large characters, *THE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN ONE*. "Yes," he exclaimed, "it is, it is herself!" and he took the picture from its place that he might examine it more minutely. "Mother! mother!" he exclaimed, whilst his whole frame was violently agitated, "could you but speak, you would tell me by what means your portrait came hither, and what particular part I am destined to act in this eventful drama. But perhaps I am mistaken. Is it in reality my mother, and may there not be some other female in the world who bears a strong resemblance to her? But it is, it is the portrait of my mother; I cannot be mistaken; and in the place where so much respect is paid to her portrait, it cannot fare ill with her son."

"Hector," sounded a voice behind a glass door, which in the interior was covered with green silk, "yes, it shall not fare ill with thee here." Hector

started, and was near falling to the ground with affright. The door opened, and a person entered, wholly a stranger to him, but in whose deportment was combined a dignity of manner, with an uncommon display of benevolence and affection. "I am sorry, my dear Hector," said he, "that a friendly and well-intentioned exclamation should have created in you this unnecessary alarm. Collect yourself, and be assured, that if an angel of heaven were here, you could not be in safer hands, nor where a more kind and affectionate treatment will be observed towards you. An unbounded affection uses not always the requisite caution in its actions; and you, you are one of the greatest treasures which I possess in the world. This frank avowal may appear astonishing to you, for to you I am a perfect stranger; you never heard my name mentioned, although a few hours after your birth you were well known to me. Sorry, however, I am to say, that your stay here will be very short; that which was promised to you by the stranger who separated you from your tutor shall be religiously and punctually performed. Therefore let us not fruitlessly spend the few hours that we may be together in asking a number of questions which your curiosity may prompt you to put, but which, from prudential motives, I cannot answer. Learn to look forward to the future with composure; many a germ is contained in its womb, which in a short time will spring up as the root of your terrestrial happiness. I have been informed that you have chosen the profession of a minister as your condition in life. Every thing depends in this world on the

virtue and ability with which we perform our duty, in whatever relation of life that duty may consist. You have selected one of vast importance and responsibility, and one which, if properly sustained, is always accompanied with honour and respect: prepare to act up to its high functions with a becoming spirit, in order that you may appear as one of its brightest ornaments. Be a good, a moral, and a useful man; and then, and then only, will terrestrial happiness be your fate. To me it would have been far more pleasing had you chosen the profession of a soldier; but it appears it is not the will of your mother, and I have no right to question any part of her conduct. The reasons which may have actuated your mother to refuse her acquiescence to my prayer, which I have often made to her, to send you hither, that my heart might be cheered by a sight of you, is not for me to divine; therefore, think not that I presume to censure or upbraid her. If she considers that I have been guilty of an act of unpardonable aggression and violence in obtaining possession of your person in the way I have done, I trust that her forgiveness will not be refused me. But tell me, my dear boy, did she never speak to you about your father?"

"Often," replied Hector, "has she spoken to me of him, and whenever she has mentioned him I have seen the tears trickle down her cheeks: but it will never be my lot to see my poor father—but—but—"

"Well, my boy," said the stranger, "what wouldst thou say?"

“ Perhaps,” said Hector, in a hesitating tone,—
“ you are my father.”

“ Your father !” said the stranger, “ how could such an extraordinary idea enter your mind as that I should be your father ?”

Hector looked him fully in the face, and answered, “ In the boudoir of my mother hangs a portrait, before which she often stands, and sometimes she kneels before it and weeps. She has informed me that it is the portrait of my father, and I have been accustomed to call it by that name from the very first hour that my tongue could lisp the name of father. Now, when I look on you, and compare in my imagination your countenance with that portrait, it appears to me that it must have been drawn for you, so striking is the resemblance ; with the exception that you are certainly more advanced in years.”

“ Know, my dear Hector,” said the stranger, interrupting him, as if he were fearful that Hector might say too much, “ I am the brother of your father ; we were born the same day, for we were twins. He lost his life on his passage to America, and at his departure, as his return was uncertain, he enjoined me to supply the place of a parent towards you. Your mother, however, from reasons best known to herself, forbade on my part all interference in your education. She never was friendly towards me, and it is in some degree, perhaps, my own fault, that the schism between us has been prolonged to the present time. Latterly, however, a kind of partial reconciliation has taken place between us, but it is still to me incomprehensible on what account she made it a

positive condition that I should not interfere in the most remote degree in any matters in which you were either immediately or remotely concerned. I have fulfilled that condition in the most rigorous manner until within these fourteen days, since which I received from one of my friends, who travelled through D——, and who there saw you, a most flattering account of your character and dispositions. I also was informed that you were on the point of visiting your mother, and I despatched a confidential messenger to her, entreating her that she would allow you to spend a few days with me on your route : my request was, however, most peremptorily refused. I therefore had recourse to force, and now the whole of this apparently mysterious business is unravelled to you. On your own account dismiss all fear, and on that of your mother be also at rest, she has been informed where you are ; and she is well assured that here no injury will accrue to you.”

The uncle of Hector paused, and for a short time he seemed to be lost in the contemplation of his nephew. On a sudden his feelings seemed completely to overpower him. Tears started into his eyes ; his emotions were too strong to be any longer concealed : he threw his arms round Hector, and said, “ Yes, just so did my brother look in his youth ; I see him now before me as he was in the heyday of his younger years. Heaven has again given to me in you what I lost in him.”

During the whole of the day Hector was never for a moment absent from his uncle, but to the surprise of the former, he was never allowed to leave

the house ; his uncle conducted him through the various apartments of his mansion, showed him all the curiosities of the place, and spoke to him much about the future, a great deal of which was, however, to him highly enigmatical. As evening approached, preparations were made for his departure. " I shall accompany you a few miles," said the uncle, " and then I shall leave you in the care of a confidential messenger. I have ordered the necessary relays of horses for you, and therefore no doubt exists in my mind, that by to-morrow at this time you will be in the arms of your mother. Tell her how you found me, and the receipt I have experienced ; intercede with her for her forgiveness, and try if you cannot effect a change in her dispositions towards me. Above all, however, I entreat you be not communicative to your preceptor ; tell him not what you here have seen, nor relate to him the subject of our discourse. To your mother, however, disclose whatever you please."

It was now completely dark, and the same carriage which had brought Hector to the house now drove up to the door. Not a moment was lost ; the uncle seated himself with Hector in the carriage, and it drove off at a rapid rate. It was, however, remarked by Hector, as not one of the least extraordinary of the circumstances in which he appeared to be at present involved, that a more than ordinary caution was observed by his uncle in preventing him from catching even a glimpse of the country through which they were then passing. The blinds of the carriage were drawn closely up, and to the frequent inquiries which Hector

made of the particular part of the country in which they then were, not the slightest satisfactory answer could be obtained.

It was near midnight when they arrived at a small inn situate by the road-side, and the uncle said, "Here, my dear Hector, we must part; further I dare not travel with you. The same person, who is my house-steward, and who brought you to my house, will accompany you to your mother. Fear not, I have confided you in good hands. In a little time you will know me better, and you will then I hope allow, that I worthily fulfil, as far as your mother will permit me, the injunctions of your deceased parent. Give this kiss for me to your mother, and accept from me this purse of gold; purchase with it whatever can contribute to your advantage or amusement; and now, my dear boy, farewell; let it be your endeavour to become an honourable and a virtuous man, that you may be the joy of your mother in her declining years."

Hector had scarcely time to thank his uncle for his kindness, when the hostler entered, informing them that the horses were to the carriage. With a joyful heart Hector proceeded towards it, but his surprise was great when he found already seated in it his former companion, who appeared, whilst his uncle was present, to treat him with uncommon respect and condescension. "Farewell, my dear boy," said the uncle. "Farewell," repeated Hector, and the carriage drove off.

"Now," said the steward, when they had proceeded a little way from the inn, "have not all my

words been verified? Have you not become acquainted with a most respectable and highly amiable relation? He will, I know, provide for your future fortune, and I know not any circumstance that will impart greater pleasure to him than to hear that you are a good and a virtuous man. It is, however, my duty to inform you that I have received the most positive orders not to deliver you myself into the arms of your mother, but I have been instructed to set you down about a mile from your mother's residence. Will that be agreeable to you?"

"If I be only so near my mother as a mile," said Hector, "I will soon find out the rest of my way."

The conversation now took a desultory turn; Hector was of course at times very inquisitive, but his companion appeared by no means disposed to be very communicative, and both of them seemed at last to occupy themselves with their own thoughts. In regard to Hector, his whole soul appeared to be agitated by doubt, suspicion, and distrust. He had innumerable questions to put to his mother, which she, and she only, could answer, and which in his opinion she could not refuse to answer. Taking into consideration the whole of her conduct, his mother appeared to him in the most extraordinary light, nor could he reconcile some traits of her character with the ideal which he had formed to himself of moral perfection. It was evident to him that she had told him much which had no foundation in truth, but by what motive could she be actuated to mislead him? It was, however, his firm belief, notwithstanding his assertion to the contrary, that the individual who had

represented himself to be his uncle, was in reality no other person than his father; but still it was a most difficult task for him to determine the exact relation which existed between him and his mother. One disadvantage, however, if such it may be called, arose from his visit to his uncle, which was that Hector now believed himself to be the sole heir to an immense property, and perhaps also to a title, for it was evident, whether the individual were his uncle or his father, that his riches were great, and, on that account, the profession of a humble minister possessed not now those attractions in his eyes which it did formerly, and he began to reflect whether, in reality, the bustle and activity of a military life would not present to him greater pleasures than the dull uniformity of a minister's vocation.

The morning broke. The sun arose in all its splendour; the earth appeared to glitter with millions of gems, as every dew-drop on leaf or blade of grass appeared a diamond. The morning air appeared to affect Hector considerably with its coldness, and he requested his conductor to allow him to dismount, and to recreate himself by a little exercise. The request was willingly granted, and they had not proceeded above a hundred paces, when they beheld a carriage approaching them at a slow rate. On a sudden, as the carriage was about to pass them, Hector exclaimed, "My mother! my mother! it is she;" and he immediately left his conductor, and was in a moment at the door of his mother's carriage. The steward witnessed the affectionate manner in which Hector was embraced by the lady in the coach,

and on the door being opened, Hector sprang into the carriage. "Adieu," he exclaimed to his former companion, "remember me kindly to my uncle. I shall now return with my mother." The two carriages were now turned in opposite directions, that of Mrs. Fitzallan taking the route towards her residence, and that of the uncle directing its course homewards.

Mrs. Fitzallan having embraced her son with all the warmth of maternal affection, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks, she said, "I have thee again in my arms, my beloved boy, and in safety; but tell me what uncle was it of whom you were speaking, it would be highly pleasing to me to know a little more about him."

"Mother," said Hector, evidently under the influence of surprise, "what a singular question have you now put to me? Are you then not acquainted with the uncle at whose house I have lately been on a visit? You were just now on the direct road to his residence, and was it not your intention to fetch me away from him? If he had but entertained the slightest suspicion of your intention, he certainly would not have parted with me so readily. His kindness and goodness to me I am not able to describe; it is, however, too true that I neither know his name nor that of the place of his residence. I however saw your portrait there, with the inscription under it, **THE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN ONE**, and in himself he bears a very strong resemblance to the portrait of my father which hangs in your boudoir. If he had not positively assured me that he was the twin brother of my father, and had you not repeatedly

informed me of the death of my parent, I do not believe any assertion either from his or your mouth, could have induced me to think that he was not my father. But, my dear mother, it appears to me a most extraordinary circumstance, that you never spoke to me of my noble and opulent uncle, and I cannot divine the reason why you do not live with him in terms of intimacy and friendship ; it appears to be his desire, that if he has given you offence by any of his actions, to make you every reparation in his power. He speaks of you in the kindest, the most affectionate manner, and entreated me to obtain your forgiveness : but forgiveness, my mother, implies on one side the commission of some injury, and what did my uncle ever do to offend you ? It is also his wish, that I should relinquish the profession of a minister, and embrace that of a soldier : will you consent to it, mother ?”

Mrs. Fitzallan, assuming a degree of composure which was evidently forced, replied, “ My dear Hector, you have put such a number of questions to me, that I know not how to answer them. It was a most unjust and violent act on the part of your uncle to take you away from me by force, and I cannot now disclose to you the reasons for not having spoken to you of him before, but be assured those reasons are founded on good and substantial grounds. If he be willing to grant you his assistance, and I do not pretend to deny that he has much in his power, be thankful for it ; at the same time I do not hold it good for young people to know that they have opulent relations, it tends to make them vain, haughty, and indolent ;

and that is one of the reasons why I concealed the circumstance from you that you had a rich uncle. It was wholly contrary to my wishes that you should know of his existence, and therefore I invariably refused his frequent invitations to allow you to visit him; on that ground I cannot overlook the forcible manner in which he obtained possession of you. In regard to the choice of your profession, do not allow yourself to be dissuaded from becoming a minister. The future will teach you that your mother was the better counsellor of the two. Besides, which of the two has the greater claim on your obedience? Have I not done much for you, and am I not willing to do still more? do not let the advice of others tear you from my heart: be assured it is only an obedient son who can become a happy man."

Hector on a sudden sunk into a deep fit of musing, which his mother did not seem very desirous of interrupting; and during the remainder of the journey, each seemed rather disposed to direct the conversation into any other channel than that which had hitherto engrossed their attention.

The travellers were now in sight of their home, when Mrs. Fitzallan first broke the silence by imposing the strictest injunction upon her son not to communicate the slightest intelligence to Mr. Bode respecting his uncle. "I will certainly follow your instructions," said Hector, "but what shall I say if Mr. Bode questions me on the subject?" "Tell him the truth," said Mrs. Fitzallan; "tell him that I have forbidden you to give any information to any one relative to the late occurrences, and I know the honourable

disposition of Mr. Bode too well not to be convinced, that after that information has been given to him, he will not put another question to you."

The joy which the worthy tutor expressed on seeing again his much-loved pupil was cordial and sincere, and Mrs. Fitzallan said to him, "Every thing, Mr. Bode, has passed off very agreeably with my son. I met the parties bringing him back, as they had discovered their error in his person; it is therefore my particular wish that you do not importune him with any questions in regard to what he has seen or heard in his absence, and I have imposed upon him the same restraint."

There are some people, who, in the fulness of their own conceited wisdom, think to prevent a discovery of their actions by some cobweb covering which their ingenuity may have woven, which, however, so far from effecting concealment, permits a full display of them. However artful and skilful an individual may suppose himself to be, and deep as he may consider his plans to be laid for the accomplishment of any particular design, it not unfrequently happens, that the very means which may have been chosen, are precisely those of all others which tend to the frustration of the plan. Had Mrs. Fitzallan been silent to Mr. Bode upon the circumstances which had lately occurred, or had she simply imposed upon her son the closest secrecy, the whole affair would perhaps have passed off, and have attracted no further notice: but the very injunction which she laid upon Mr. Bode not to make any inquiry, was positive conviction to him that there were some very extraordinary circumstances

connected with the absence of her son, and that the whole explanation as given by herself, was decidedly founded on a desire to mislead. Still, however, his disposition was too noble and liberal to allow him to dive into the secrets of his employers, with this consideration that as he was by no means implicated in any of the transactions, he could not be made responsible for any of the consequences. Mr. Bode very prudently kept his suspicions confined within his own breast, and neither directly nor indirectly could Mrs. Fitzallan discover that Mr. Bode had interfered any further in the affairs of the family than the duties of his vocation compelled him.

CHAPTER IV.

She was his own, his all ; the crowd may prove
A transient feeling, and misname it Love.
His was a higher impulse :—'twas a part
Of the warm blood that circled through his heart ;
A fervid energy ; a spell that bound
Thoughts, wishes, feelings,—in one hallowed round.

ONE day, when Mrs. Fitzallan was with her son and Mr. Bode in the drawing-room, she drew a letter from her pocket ; but before she began to read it, she said to the latter, “ I do not think it advisable that my son should return to his former seminary. I have this morning received a letter from Professor Thornton in Glasgow, to whom I wrote, with a request that he would receive my son as a member of his college. He now writes to me, granting my request ; but it is not my intention that he should repair thither without me. He shall merely attend the lectures and other lessons of the college ; but for very weighty reasons, which I cannot now divulge, I have resolved that he shall live in my own house : it is my determination that he shall be under the immediate superintendence of his mother. We will depart immediately for Glasgow, and I will there live in indissoluble union with my son. It is, however,

my earnest request that the place whither we are going may not be made public in this neighbourhood. Be it therefore your immediate business, Mr. Bode, to pack up the whole of your property. I have already despatched Philip to your former residence at the university to bring away every thing that belongs to you and Hector, and he has my instructions regarding the exact place where he will find us.

This sudden departure of Mrs. Fitzallan with her son was no sooner known in the neighbourhood than every mouth gaped with wonder, and every eye was ready to start from the socket with surprise. Many reports, by no means redounding to the purity of the character of the lady, were immediately put into circulation. That something extraordinary must have happened to induce her so suddenly to break up the whole of her establishment was most clear to every one, but what that something was, or by what means they could attain to the knowledge of it, set the whole community in as great an uproar as if Rübzahl had on a sudden paid them a visit from his subterranean kingdom to select another virgin to grace his rocky throne. Mrs. Fitzallan was by no means ignorant of the many evil reports which the spirit of detraction had circulated respecting her; at the same time that she was conscious to herself that she had not given the slightest cause for their foundation; she therefore gave herself very little concern about them; she allowed the tongue of scandal to wag on until it was tired, or until some new accident or some backsliding on the part of some member of

their own community, hitherto deemed immaculate, furnished them with a fresh topic for their evening conversations.

The joy which Mrs. Fitzallan now experienced in her son was such which a mother only can feel who beholds a much loved son advancing to manhood, adorned with every accomplishment which may be considered an ornament to his nature. He had stored his mind with useful knowledge, and in the fine arts he had attained a proficiency seldom exhibited at so early an age. He had particularly applied himself to music; the most celebrated works of the great masters of the continent—of Mozart, of Beethoven, and of Weber—were to him as familiar as his national songs; and, impelled by that romantic enthusiasm so natural to youth, he would fancy himself in those moments when under the influence of the “magic of sweet sounds,” as born for some higher purposes than his present prospects presented to him; he felt within himself the latent sparks of a genius which urged him to soar beyond the sphere allotted to him, and to court a difficulty merely for the satisfaction of overcoming it.

Hector had not been settled many days at Glasgow, when the conduct of his mother again excited the surprise of Mr. Bode. She had left her country residence for the avowed purpose of being constantly with her son, and she had in fact made those regulations which seemed to insure a permanent residence in the town. One morning, however, she sent for Mr. Bode, and thus addressed him: “I am only to be compared to the seed shaken from the thistle’s

head, driven about by every breath of wind, and knowing not where to find a resting place; would that it were allowed me to declare to you the reasons for the step which I am now about to take, and which must impress on your mind an unfavourable idea of the firmness or consistency of my character; but I am the slave of circumstances, the subject of an iron destiny which I cannot control. There is not a page in the book of fate which has yet been unopened in which my name is not written in dark and sombre characters. I presume not to contend against a power so tremendous, for opposition would only perhaps increase the evil; it is my duty to submit, and therefore, my good friend, be not surprised when I inform you that I shall return to-morrow to my country residence, and there live in a state of positive seclusion. The time will I hope come, and heaven grant it may not be far distant, when the mystery which now appears to accompany all my actions will be solved, and you will then be able to form a proper estimate of my character. Ask me no questions; I should perhaps be obliged to have recourse to falsehood in my answers, and to that I had better not be subjected. I shall depart early to-morrow, and I request that you will desist from entering with my son into any examination of the causes which may have compelled me to this unexpected step."

Mr. Bode, although evidently under the influence of astonishment, promised rigidly to obey the injunctions of Mrs. Fitzallan, and on the following morning she was on the way to her country residence.

We will not pretend to lift the veil which conceals

the mystery of Mrs. Fitzallan's conduct, but it is by no means improbable that her sudden departure was in some degree connected with the following circumstance.

One day, as Hector was leaving the college, he was accosted by a stranger, whose manners and dress bespoke him to belong to the middle class of society: "Is not your name Hector Fitzallan?" asked the stranger.

"It is," replied Hector; "and may I ask your reason for the inquiry?"

"Accompany me," said the stranger, "to yonder inn; there you will meet with a merchant who has an important communication to make to you."

"To what country does the stranger belong," asked Hector; "and to what am I to attribute this unexpected invitation?"

"I am the host of the inn," said the stranger; "and the merchant informs me that he comes from America."

"From America!" exclaimed Hector; "that is rather surprising; and how say you—he has an important communication to make to me?"

"Such was his declaration to me," said the host.

"But how came you to be acquainted with my person?" asked Hector.

"I—I—" said the host, hesitating, "but come with me, and I will then answer all your questions."

Hector, impelled by the force of curiosity, or rather by a strong presentiment that the communication which the stranger had to make had some

direct reference to his deceased parent, followed the host to the inn.

On his arrival there he was conducted to a private apartment, where he remained some minutes alone, in a state of the most painful anxiety. At length the door opened, and a tall, spare, emaciated man entered, habited in a foreign costume, and addressing himself at once to Hector, he said, "Am I to consider that I am now addressing myself to Hector Fitzallan?"

"I am that person," answered Hector.

"Then I pray you be seated," said the stranger. "for my business with you is of a most important nature. Your mother and yourself both believe that your father perished at sea, but I bring you the intelligence that he is now living."

"Living!" exclaimed Hector; "my father living! Do not deceive me, I pray you, on a point of such vast importance."

"It is an indisputable fact," said the stranger; "your father is now alive"

"Where then is he living," asked Hector, "that I may hasten to him."

"On my departure from Philadelphia I conversed with him, and I now deliver you two letters; one addressed to your mother and one to yourself. If you should feel any inclination to answer the letters, in eight days I shall return through this place, you will find me at this inn, and I will be the bearer of your answer."

"My father living!" exclaimed Hector, taking the letters from the stranger. "And why," said he,

“did he not write before now to my mother? Why does he not return? and why does he not send for us to join him in America? How shall I explain this? How shall I decipher this enigma?”

“I am not able to solve it,” said the stranger; “I presume not to interfere with the actions and motives of others. I can only repeat to you the offer, that I will most readily be the bearer of your answer.”

“But will you not inform me,” said Hector—

“I pray you importune me not with your questions,” said the stranger, interrupting him; “I have fulfilled the commission of your father, and am not authorized by him to enter into any further explanation with you. Business now calls me away: in eight days you will find me here again. Adieu.”

Thus saying, he abruptly left the room, leaving Hector in a state of the most profound astonishment. Suddenly he roused himself, and hurried towards his residence. Mr. Bode was fortunately absent; and, in a state of the utmost excitement, he broke the seal of his father’s letter, and read as follows:

“Your father, whom you consider as dead, is still living: it is his most fervent wish to press you to his heart. Circumstances of the most painful and distressing nature have long separated him from your mother; but never, never will she be forgotten. There is scarcely an hour of the last eighteen years of his life that he has not thought of her; there is not a scene which he has formed of future happiness in which she did not appear as the most prominent figure. Oh, that you would be my intercessor with her! that

she could be induced to forgive his previous fault, for which his atonement has been so severe. He implores her again to bless him with her love ; he would consider himself as the happiest of men if he could only be permitted to live in her vicinity. He would then immediately leave America, and the place of his future abode should be left entirely to herself. Riches he possesses in superfluity, and therefore he has it in his power to conduce considerably to her future comfort. Should you on the receipt of this be at a distance from her, hasten to her immediately, and the gratitude of your father towards you shall be boundless. The bearer of this will on his return deliver to you a sum of money, which you will transmit to your mother, and tell her that it is from one who ever loved her, and who will never cease to love her whilst in this world."

The contents of this letter made a powerful impression on Hector. He was almost disposed to be angry with his mother, as he attributed to her all the blame of the separation from his father. He determined, however, as far as himself was concerned, to effect a reconciliation between his parents. His impatience to communicate to his mother what he supposed would be most gratifying intelligence to her, would not allow him to await the return of Mr. Bode. He therefore wrote a note to him, informing him of the circumstance, hired a horse, and he was many miles on his journey when Mr. Bode returned.

Mr. Bode read the note of Hector, which was almost a transcript of his father's letter ; but he shook

his head significantly, and merely said, "This is indeed one of the dark ways of destiny which I will not pretend to explore, for I should perhaps find myself in a labyrinth, in which I should be ultimately lost."

On the arrival of Hector at his mother's, he was informed that she had been suddenly taken ill on the preceding night, and that she was then confined to her bed; not wishing to come upon his mother unawares, he desired one of her attendants to apprize her of his arrival, and in the mean time he went to the stable to see that his horse was properly attended to; but how great was his surprise, when, in the stable-yard, he saw the very coach belonging to his uncle in which he had been carried away from Mr. Bode. He inquired of one of the grooms at what time the carriage arrived, and the company that came in it; but had Hector put the question to one of the pupils of an asylum for the deaf, he would have received just as satisfactory an answer. He then applied to another domestic; still the same ignorance was manifest. Hector now plainly perceived that secrecy was imposed on the servants, and he therefore forbore importuning them any further.

He was now summoned into the presence of his mother, who embraced him in the most affectionate manner, and inquired the cause of his most unexpected visit.

"Perhaps," said Hector, "the joyful tidings which I have to communicate to you, will be too much for you to bear in your present state of health."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Fitzallan; "I am fully prepared to hear all you have to impart to me."

Hector now informed his mother of the import of his interview with the American, and delivered to her the letters of his father; but Mrs. Fitzallan immediately said, "It gives me pleasure," my dear Hector, "to observe that you love a father whom you never saw; but do not allow yourself to be imposed upon. I declare to you most solemnly, and were these the last words which I am now speaking on my death-bed, that your father no longer lives in Philadelphia. But what is the import of his letter to you?"

"It appears," said Hector, "to be his principal wish that I should be the intercessor between you, and that you would again render him happy by your love. He acknowledges the fault which has excited your displeasure; he repents of it, and implores your pardon. Will you not forgive him, my dear mother, and let us live in happiness and concord for the remainder of our existence?"

"Believe me, my dear Hector," said his mother, "the whole is the invention of some wicked designing individual, who has some sinister view of his own to accomplish, by representing me to you in a disadvantageous light, and thereby alienate your affections from me. I am not angry with your father; I have long since forgiven him; and if he were alive I would press him with the purest love to my heart."

She had scarcely pronounced these words, when, to the evident alarm of Mrs. Fitzallan, but, on the contrary, to the joyful surprise of Hector, his uncle entered the room. He had arrived the preceding day at the residence, and now presented himself most unexpectedly before Mrs. Fitzallan had had

time to apprise her son that his uncle was actually in the house. On his entrance the uncle said, "This is a most agreeable meeting, my dear boy: your mother has undoubtedly apprized you of my presence here, and now wishes to impart to me an unexpected pleasure. You are welcome, my dear boy," shaking him cordially by the hand.

Before Hector could enter into any further conversation with his uncle, Mrs. Fitzallan said to him, "Can you form any idea of the gross imposition which has been practised upon Hector: some stranger has been attempting to persuade him that his father still lives in Philadelphia, and he has just now delivered me a letter from him. I am glad you are here, as you will be able to decide if it be in the handwriting of your brother: do, I pray you, give my son your candid opinion of it."

The uncle took the letter, and examined it attentively. He then said, "I will positively maintain that the superscription is not the handwriting of my brother, but still it is not wholly strange to me, nor do I think that it will be so to you. But will you not read the letter? you must be curious to know its contents."

Mrs. Fitzallan perused the letter, but she could not stifle her emotions, and tears ran down her cheeks. Hector now exclaimed, "Mother, have you now any doubt that this letter is from my father, and that he still lives?"

"I doubt of both," said Mrs. Fitzallan, with a trembling voice; "but in the perusal of this letter the scenes of former days rush upon my memory; scenes

of my earliest, greatest happiness, but which are passed never to return. It has opened many a cell where remembrance sleeps, and has torn open afresh many a wound which I thought was closed for ever. But that the letter is not from your father the signature will attest."

It was like the letter of Hector, signed with a simple D. "But," exclaimed Hector, "for what purpose is this cruel game played with me. It is infamous to excite a hope in a human heart, which has no prospect of ever being realized."

It was now evident that Mrs. Fitzallan was desirous of directing the conversation into a different channel, for she said, "Your uncle, my dear Hector, heard of my illness, and his anxiety about me urged him to pay me this visit: there is now no longer any misunderstanding between us; a complete reconciliation has taken place, and you are at liberty to visit him whenever you please; but still I should not wish you ever to do it without my knowledge, and I have no objection, when my health is restored, to accompany you thither. Wait, however, a little time, and his name and place of residence shall be made known to you."

"I cannot divine," said Hector, "why a circumstance, which is known to many, should be just converted into a secret with me. There is not a domestic in the whole establishment of my uncle, were I to inquire of him, who has it not in his power to satisfy my curiosity in every point to the utmost."

"Curb that curiosity for a while," said Mrs. Fitzallan; "were you at present to be made acquainted

with certain particulars, it might prove the death of—”

At this moment the family physician was announced, which broke the thread of Mrs. Fitzallan's speech, and left Hector in a state of the most intense anxiety. He regarded the physician as a positive intruder ; for never was a visit, as far as regarded himself, more unfortunate. He, however, obeyed the command of his mother to leave the room, but he secretly hoped that his uncle would prolong his stay, as from him he hoped to obtain some information respecting the authenticity of his father's letter. In this, however, he was completely disappointed ; for his uncle, so far from entering into any confidential intercourse with him, appeared to shun every opportunity of being alone with him ; and on the following morning before day-break the uncle departed, without having even bidden farewell to his nephew, or even of having informed him of his intended departure. When Hector mentioned these circumstances to his mother, she merely replied, that his uncle was a man of very eccentric habits, and that she possessed not the slightest control over his actions.

Hector remained a few days with his mother, and then returned to college ; but he was not the bearer of any letter from her to his father in America, because she said it was her firm conviction that he was no longer living in that country. She also added, “ You will find, my son, that the pretended American will not return to the inn for your answer, and on that you may depend ; therefore give yourself no

further trouble about your answer to your supposed father's letter."

Hector was, however, the bearer of a letter from his mother to Mr. Bode, who, on meeting Hector, said, "If you had imparted to me the imposition which some designing knave has practised upon you, I would have spared you the trouble of your journey."

"I do not however regret having taken it," said Hector, "for I found my uncle with my mother; and I am able to impart to you the pleasing intelligence, that a perfect reconciliation has taken place between him and my mother."

"With your uncle!" exclaimed Mr. Bode, apparently greatly astonished; "that is to me indeed most gratifying information."

"But," said Hector, "it is still to me an inexplicable enigma that I should be kept in ignorance of the name of my uncle and the place of his abode. If you be privy to either, I implore you make me acquainted with them. I solemnly vow to you that I will never divulge either of them."

"I declare I am ignorant of both," said Mr. Bode. "Your mother never condescended to speak to me on the subject, and I do not consider that I am invested with any right to interfere in family affairs."

Hector now delivered to Mr. Bode the letter of his mother, and Mr. Bode retired to an adjoining room to peruse it undisturbed. In a short time he returned, and said, "I find in this letter that it is the wish of your mother that you should confine yourself to the study of theology; and further, that you do not allow yourself to be diverted from it by the advice

or impertinent interference of strangers. It is most probable that, in a few months, we shall set out on an agreeable journey."

"My mother," exclaimed Hector, "never mentioned a word to me of such an intention."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Bode, "she had not definitively made up her mind to it, and therefore considered it useless to speak to you about it."

Hector was, however, not satisfied with this explanation; and he was now convinced that his mother had so far implicated Mr. Bode in the events which were now passing, and that he was enjoined to so strict a secrecy, that to attempt to extract any information from him was a positive waste of time. He therefore desisted from importuning him with any further questions; and at no future time did Mr. Bode show any disposition to touch upon the affairs of his mother, or be in the least communicative respecting them.

CHAPTER V.

I stood amid the glittering throng,
I heard a voice, its tones were sweet,
I turned to see from whence they came,
And gazed on all I longed to meet.
She was a fair and gentle girl,
Her bright smile greeted me by chance,
I whispered low, I took her hand,
I led her forth to dance.

THE mind of Hector was now evidently in a distracted state ; he often visited the inn, and inquired for the American, who was to be the bearer of his answer to his father ; but to his great surprise, instead of meeting with the stranger, a letter was one day delivered to him, which, according to the report of the host, was left at his house by a servant dressed in very rich livery, and who evidently belonged to the establishment of some person of exalted rank. Full of curiosity, Hector broke the seal, but his surprise was boundless, when he recognised the same handwriting as that of the letter which was pretended to be written by his father from America. At the head of the letter stood the following words in large characters :

“ HEAR, SEE, AND BE SILENT.

“ Your father lives, and were the combined world

to tell you that he is dead, attach no credit to it. He watches all your steps. You are surrounded by men who are in his pay, and who transmit to him a weekly account of your conduct. Hitherto he has had no reason to complain of you ; but be upon your guard, you have an enemy in the neighbourhood, who sooner or later will involve you in an unpleasant quarrel. Show yourself brave and firm against him ; force him to respect and esteem you, for any pusillanimity on your part would only expose you to renewed insults. I am not ignorant of your having spent a day with my brother, and I could say that I am privy to other circumstances than that. I should, however, involve both your mother and yourself in the greatest misery, were I to emerge at present from my obscurity. It is necessary that the world should believe, at least for some time, that neither of you partake of the slightest relationship with me. The 10th of July is your birth-day. I shall celebrate it by a fête ; you will be invited to it with your tutor, and on no account must you decline the invitation. You will see me there, but it will not be in my power to make myself known to you. Impart not the contents of this letter to any one—not even to your mother. Act nobly ; be on your guard, and remember the 10th of July. D.”

Hector perused the letter several times, and each time his astonishment increased. It was impossible for him in his present frame of mind to repair to Mr. Bode, as his countenance would betray the agitated state of his feelings. He hurried out at one of the gates of the city, and sought a retired

place where he could give unrestrained vent to his feelings, and cogitate in secret over the mysterious situation in which he was placed.

“Then,” says he, “my father does actually live ! he has himself informed me of it ; and more than all, that he is in my immediate vicinity ; but how can I reconcile this information with that which he sent me but a week ago, that he was still living in Philadelphia ? Is not this a decisive proof that the whole is an imposition ? But of what advantage can it be to any one to impose upon me by such gross falsehoods ? He warns me against an enemy. I know of no one whom I have offended ; but the 10th of July will determine it, whether a secret has been imparted to me in which I can place any belief. But what must be my opinion of my mother ? what shall I say to her ? Is she, or is she not ignorant that my father lives, and does she keep it a secret from me on account of some prudential motive, or until permission be granted to her by my father ?”

Embarrassed with these conflicting sentiments, not one of which conducted him to a satisfactory result, he returned home, and on meeting Mr. Bode the latter said, “You have placed me in great alarm about you, my dear boy. Your protracted and unusual absence gave rise to some very unpleasant feelings about your safety ; I know not how to account for it, but some late events appear to run in a very eccentric course, nor am I able to discover their end or aim. I have now to inform you that we are invited to a ball, and what is very remarkable, it is on the 10th of July, your birth-day. I could not

definitively accept the invitation without your concurrence, and therefore I merely sent a conditional answer to this effect, that if no unforeseen accident occurred in the mean time, we would accept the invitation."

"Who then gives the ball?" asked Hector.

"The name which is written underneath," answered Mr. Bode, "is such a perfect scrawl, that I cannot decipher it. Here is the card of invitation."

Hector attempted to make out the signature, but it was a task too difficult for him to accomplish; he however ascertained that several of the most respectable families of the city were invited, as well also as a great portion of the members of the college, who were allied to families of the most exalted rank. Hector now lost not a moment in making some inquiries in the proper place respecting the name of the individual who was to give the ball, and the current report was, that it was given by a General Hamilton in honour of the celebration of the marriage of his daughter with Major Denison. He had heard of General Hamilton, and also of the approaching nuptials of his daughter, but according to the contents of the letter which had been left for him at the inn, his father expressly stated that the fête was to be given by himself, in honour of the birth-day of his son. He could not believe General Hamilton to be his father, for there were several circumstances which had a positive tendency to contradict it. He had been for a considerable time a resident in the city, his connexions and the previous circumstances of his life were all well known, and Hector also

ascertained that the general had never been in America ; independently of which, the very age of the general precluded the idea of him being his parent. Hector was, however, convinced that the general was in some degree implicated in the plot which was then secretly carrying on, for to his great surprise, a few days after he had received the invitation to the ball, he received one from the general himself to a concert at his own house, and Mr. Bode was also included in the invitation. Here, thought Hector, I shall obtain some clue as to the name of the identical person who is to give the ball, where I am to see my father ; and with an anxious palpitating heart he repaired to the house of the general. There he found several noble families assembled, and he cast his eyes to every quarter of the room, with the hope of discovering some one whose look and figure might correspond with the portrait which hung in his mother's boudoir ; but the assembly was chiefly composed of young people, the majority of whom were entire strangers to Hector, nor was there a single individual whose conduct indicated the least reserve or embarrassment. It did not, however, escape the observation of Hector, that he appeared to be selected by the general as the peculiar object of his attention and regard, and when supper was concluded, and dancing proposed, the general took Hector confidentially by the hand, and led him into an adjoining apartment, where he thus addressed him : " You must be naturally surprised, my dear Fitzallan, at your having received an invitation to my house, without any previous acquaintance, nor even

a common introduction, but that surprise will in a great degree subside when I inform you, that your father was the companion of my youth, and that it was only a few days ago that I heard you were his son ; I am certainly aware that you do not bear his name, but that is done from very prudential motives."

"What then is the real name of my father?" asked Hector.

"I also know your mother and your grandmother," continued the general, without apparently paying any attention to the question of Hector ; "I resided during several years in the same place with him, but it is now about twenty years ago since we parted ; I must however, say thus much, that you must put all your powers to the fullest stretch, if you expect to tread in the steps of your father, and to supply that place in the world which will be one day vacant by his death."

"My father is then in reality alive?" asked Hector.

"As far as I know he is alive," answered the general.

"My mother assures me, however," said Hector, "that he was drowned on his passage to America."

"I do remember now," said the general, "having heard a report to that effect, and your mother must certainly know better than I whether your father be dead or alive. It is not in my power to give a decided opinion on the subject."

"He has written to me this very day," said Hector, "to inform me that he is still living."

"Do not harass yourself with these perplexing doubts and conjectures," said the general ; "I am con

vinced that in a little time the whole mystery will be explained to you."

"There is then a mystery?" asked Hector. "And allow me to ask you, sir, is the ball to which I have the honour of being invited, and at which I am informed that I shall see my father——?"

At this critical moment the door opened, and Frederick Campbell, the nephew of the general, entered, and said, "Do not, my dear uncle, keep Fitzallan so long from the ball-room, his presence is indispensable to us;" and taking Hector by the hand, he led him away without the slightest opposition on the part of the general, who, on the contrary, appeared rather pleased at the interruption. On leaving the room, Campbell said to Hector, "You must guard your heart well to-night, my dear friend, for the beautiful daughter of the Earl of Glencoe is in the ball-room; never before have my eyes beheld such a superlative beauty. I have danced with her twice, and in reality I thought I had an inhabitant of heaven for my partner. Take care, Hector, that her charms do not involve you in as many difficulties as the beauty of Helen did of old your namesake."

"Believe me," said Hector, "I am not so great a fool as to fall in love with the daughter of an earl; would it not be the height of presumption in me, a humble student of divinity?"

"I think every man," said Campbell, "who sees Amelia Fortescue must, in spite of himself, be a student of divinity. I am certain that her Creator, when he gave the last finish to her form, could scarcely tell whether he had made an angel or a mortal."

“You are most exuberant in her praise,” said Hector, “and your very eulogium shows me how ridiculous it would be in me to aspire to the hand of so great a beauty, with the knowledge that she must be surrounded by suitors of far more valid pretensions than any to which I can lay claim; would she not look down upon me from her exalted station, and laugh at me for my temerity? And further, I have always entertained the opinion, that a great disparity of station is the cause of many unhappy marriages.”

“Not if real love were the basis of them,” said Campbell.

“I consider real love, as you term it,” said Hector, “to be a chimera; it is very like an apparition, every one talks of it, but no one has seen it.”

It must, however, be allowed that Hector Fitzallan differed in a very striking degree from the majority of young men, who are in general too prone to entertain a better opinion of themselves than they in reality deserve, or which other people are inclined to entertain for them. His figure, his qualifications, and his manners, were such as could not fail to make an impression on every female heart, for although he appeared not to court admiration, nor to deem himself worthy of it, yet he stole, as it were insensibly, into the good opinion of those with whom he associated, and having once gained that good opinion, he knew how to maintain and improve it. He was not one of those vain and flattering coxcombs, a kind of centaur, half male, half female, who think that a punctilious attention to the tying of a cravat, or the adjustment of a lock of hair, entitles them to admi-

ration and respect. Under the tuition of Mr. Bode he had imbibed some well-founded ideas of the real dignity of the human character ; he knew its constituent principles, and he was never known to sacrifice one of them at the shrine of fashionable folly.

When Hector and his friend entered the room, a country dance had just finished : some portion of the company were engaged in conversation, but the greater part were collected round a piano-forte, on which a young lady was playing, who, Hector was informed, was no less a personage than the idol of the evening, the beautiful Amelia Fortescue. The crowd had hitherto prevented Hector from obtaining a glimpse of her person, but being passionately fond of music, he separated from his friend, and hastened towards the instrument. Lady Amelia was just at that moment playing one of the brilliant passages from the opera of *Urania*, and when the eye of Hector first fell on the lovely performer, a kind of electric fire seemed to pervade his whole frame. He stood as if the horn of Oberon had enchanted him, fixed and immovable—all sense, all feeling seemed to be combined in one, and that one was deep and glowing admiration of the splendid beauty which was spread before him. He had followed beauty in various relations ; he had seen it in the enthusiastic moment of self-devotion, he had witnessed it in that most eloquent of all moments, when a bewitching melancholy steals over the countenance, and a tear trembles on the eye-lash, the guilty tell-tale of a wounded heart. But when the full chords of harmony burst upon his ear, and those chords were struck by a

hand that was worthy to strike the strings of a harp of heaven, the association appeared to hold complete dominion over his senses, and at this moment had the figure of his father started before him, it would have been rejected as scarcely worthy of a thought.

Lady Amelia rose from the instrument, and cast her eyes with maiden bashfulness to the ground. It was the first time that she had ventured to play before an assembled company, and she well knew that she was but yet a scholar in the science. She was immediately joined by a pretty, lively girl, who, Hector was informed, was the companion and friend of Lady Amelia. On passing the spot where Hector stood, she said to one of the company, "It is true that Lady Amelia cannot be called a proficient in the science, but the applause which she has received this night will, I have no doubt, act as a stimulus to her to perfect herself in so elegant an accomplishment. If, however, I be not mistaken in the name, I understand there is a gentleman in the room of the name of Fitzallan, who possesses great skill on the piano-forte, with the advantage of a finely modulated voice."

"It would give me great pleasure to hear him play," said Lady Amelia.

"My dear Lady Amelia," said Mrs. Hamilton, the wife of the general, "Mr. Fitzallan is one of my present visitors, and I have not the slightest doubt that at your request he will not hesitate a moment to favour us with a specimen of his skill. It will give me pleasure to introduce him to you."

Hector during this time was standing at the piano-forte, turning over the leaves of a music book, when

on a sudden he was accosted by Mrs. Hamilton, who having introduced Lady Amelia to him, solicited him to favour them with the overture to the Freischütz.

"I must, though unwillingly, refuse your request, madam," said Hector, in the most respectful manner ; "were I to play I should be guilty either of rudeness or presumption."

"How so, Mr. Fitzallan?" asked Lady Amelia, "we will willingly absolve you from the charge of both, and the penalty which we will inflict upon you for your imagined fault shall be our thanks."

"That were indeed a severe penalty," said Hector. "But you will allow, Lady Amelia, that I should be guilty of presumption, were I to imagine that I possess greater skill than yourself, and I should certainly be guilty of rudeness were I to attempt to surpass you. I therefore feel myself placed in rather an embarrassing situation, from which I dare only relieve myself in the best possible manner, by choosing the least of two evils, and rather appear unkind than rude and presumptuous."

"You have a very happy talent of extricating yourself from your supposed predicament," said Mrs. Hamilton, "the general would call it a skilful manœuvre, but you shall not escape so easily."

"Do let me entreat you to play," said Lady Amelia, "and in regard to surpassing me, do try and be as rude as you can."

This was said with so much naïveté and pleasing affability, that Hector could no longer refuse the solicitation, and seated himself at the instrument. It was some time before he could sufficiently collect

himself. Amelia Fortescue stood by his side in all the fulness of her angel beauty; he thought he heard the throbbings of her heart, wild and irregular in its beatings, as if under the influence of some mighty passion. There was something in the very air around him which appeared to animate his spirits; his whole soul was fired with one desire, and that desire was to please Amelia Fortescue. The brilliancy of his execution astonished the audience; his combinations possessed an originality which could only be the offspring of an inspired genius, and his finale was crowned with the most rapturous applause. The thanks of Amelia were a sufficient reward for his exertions, and she declared, that as far as regarded herself, he had shown himself the rudest person in the room; but, she added, with a smile for which an anchoret might almost have been tempted to forget his vow, "I promised to forgive you," and then tendering her hand, "you have my pardon for all your rudeness."

This was one of the bright moments in the life of Hector Fitzallan, which is remembered even on the brink of the grave. In the gloom of despondency or the darkness of grief, such moments as these shine as some brilliant stars in the firmament, when all the rest are shrouded in the mists of the night.

Preparations were now made to resume the dance, but Hector did not presume to solicit the hand of Lady Amelia, but selected a partner who appeared to him of humbler rank; but when it came to his turn to take the hand of Lady Amelia in the dance, he knew not how to account for it, but by some involun-

tary motion he could not refrain from pressing it ; whether the pressure was returned, is one of those problems which now can never be solved ; but whatever the cold-blooded cynic may say, there is scarcely a sensation more voluptuous or more thrilling than that which two lovers experience whose hands meet together for the first time ; there is then a language told which no ear can hear, but 'tis felt to the heart's core, and fills it with an ecstasy, the foretaste of the bliss of heaven.

The dance was finished, and Hector was sitting on a sofa, his eyes directed to *one* point of the room, and what that point contained may be easily divined, when the sprightly Julia Manners, the friend of Lady Amelia, came tripping towards him. "About what are you philosophizing, Mr. Fitzallan?" she said ; "you appear amongst the gay to be the least gay."

"Pardon me," said Hector, "but you lie under a great mistake, I never enjoyed greater happiness in my life."

"Why then," said Julia, "do you put on such a dolorous Don-Quixote-like countenance?"

"Because," Hector replied, "I was thinking how short the duration of that happiness may be?"

"The same objects," said Julia, "which confer that happiness to-night, may perhaps continue to grant it in future."

"That is the very subject of my meditations," said Hector, "and also of my fears."

"Come, now," said Julia, "consider me your father-confessor, disclose to me in what your present happiness consists, and I may perhaps be the means

of enabling you to enjoy it for ever; but tell me first, why do you not dance with Lady Amelia? she will perhaps be offended if you do not invite her to dance with you."

"I would not be guilty of such presumption," said Hector.

"Fear not," said Julia, "you will not be refused."

Emboldened by this assurance on the part of Julia, Hector approached Lady Amelia, and solicited her hand for the next dance. "It is with regret," she answered, "that I am obliged to refuse you, being engaged for the next two dances, but," in a whisper, and with a look expressive of the purest delight, "the third dance I will consider myself engaged to you."

Hector stood on the pinnacle of human bliss, and so high and mighty were his feelings, that he considered it would be an act of profanation to dance with any other lady, or even to touch the hand of one, before the moment arrived when he was to take the hand of Amelia to lead her out to her station in the dance. He seated himself in a retired part of the room, and with his eyes followed Amelia through all the mazy evolutions of the dance. She appeared to him like some light-winged sylph bounding in the air, or as a nymph, whose footsteps are so light as not to make a mark on ocean's yellow sands. Once he caught her eye, and a lovely smile sat upon her countenance, but could he flatter himself that that smile beamed for him? could he, as a mere plebeian, venture to raise his expectations so high as to believe that Lady Amelia Fortescue, the daughter of one of Scotia's noblest earls, could ever stoop so

low as to be enamoured of him? but how presumptuous is sometimes the heart of man when under the influence of love! animated by its spirit, with one bound it overleaps the obstacles which rank, titles, or opulence may throw in its way, and which, on any other occasion, would be deemed insurmountable. Love is, of all passions, the passion of enthusiasm, but there are few persons who are able to flatter themselves with having experienced that enthusiasm in its fullest and most undivided force. It does not consist, as it is supposed, in ardent desires, in lively enjoyments, but it consists in that total denial of ourselves, that forgetfulness of our very being, which causes all our sensations to have some relation to the beloved object. The universe to a lover is only that spot which is inhabited by his mistress, all the rest is a desert, he could not breathe in it; the flowers in it have no perfume, the rays of the sun have neither light nor life in them, all objects in it to him are strange; he sees no beauty in the stars of heaven, no further than that in the purity of their light, and the eternal duration of their being, they may be the symbols of the purity and eternity of his own love. The air in which her name is mentioned is the only atmosphere in which he wishes to breathe; the rose which fades on her bosom, would be to him a relic of adoration.

It cannot be supposed that the heart of Hector Fitzallan was yet vivified by such exalted sentiments, for he was yet almost ignorant of the nature of the feelings by which it was oppressed; a change, a mighty change had taken place in him; nature had

spoken to him in her imperious tone, and it is a voice which humanizes the savage, and diffuses over the heart of man, the sweetest—brightest—proudest feelings of his existence.

CHAPTER VI.

Is the throne of thy conquest thy soft lip of roses ?
Or the flexible charm of thy bright blue eye ?
Is the temple where grandeur or sweetness reposes,
The soft heaving breast, or the forehead so high ?
Oh lovely thine eye, but more lovely shines through it,
The spirit unwasted, unwither'd by time,
The frame may be fair through whose crystal we view it,
But fairer within is the picture sublime.

HECTOR, in a retired part of the room, was secretly, and as he thought unnoticed, feasting his eyes on the glowing charms of Amelia ; he was now almost living, as it were, in a world of his own creation, peopled with forms of angel beauty, and one more prominent than all the rest, the beau ideal of all the perfection that a woman can exhibit in a terrestrial form. He was too much occupied with his own feelings to notice a circumstance which occurred at the opposite end of the room, where on the opening of a private door, a tall, meagre figure entered the apartment with a kind of *brusquerie* inconsistent with the polished manners of those into whose company he had intruded himself. He was attired in a common travelling dress, and more fitted for the exterior of a stage coach than a ball room. He appeared to know no one, nor to be known by any one,

and yet it was remarked, to the great surprise of all who observed the extraordinary motions of the stranger, that no measures were adopted either by General Hamilton or his lady to exclude the intruder from the company. Every eye in that part of the room was rivetted upon him, but he seemed perfectly indifferent to the notice which he attracted, nor did he pay the slightest attention to the many unpleasant remarks which he must have overheard, that were made on his most untimely intrusion. His look, which was most piercing and penetrating, appeared to pervade every part of the room, as if in search of some particular object, and that object, it must not be concealed, was no other person than Hector Fitzallan. He too, however, at that moment cared not if a whole host of nondescript strangers had entered the room, he felt only interested about one, but he was on a sudden roused from his reverie by General Hamilton, who accosting him in a whisper, said, "Retire into that antichamber—quick, quick, or you will be discovered."

"By whom shall I be discovered?" asked Hector, in an anxious tone.

"Ask no questions," said the General; "wait there till you see me again; quick, quick."

Hector was wholly confounded at this conduct of the General, and he began to expostulate; the General, however, would not allow him a moment for explanation, but taking him by the arm, led him to the antichamber, and having hurried him into it, closed the door, and then mingled again in the company as if nothing had occurred to disturb his tran-



"He was by a window looked down the passage, by General Farnham was
 accosting him in a whisper, "where are they, gentlemen, quick, quick
 or you will be discovered."

quillity. In the mean time the stranger had placed himself exactly opposite to the place where Amelia Fortescue was dancing; he seemed to eye her with the most scrupulous attention, following her as she proceeded down the dance, and appearing perfectly indifferent whether he stood in the way of the dancers, or disturbed the regularity of their evolutions. A smile of delight and approbation seemed on a sudden to illumine the hitherto sullen and careworn features of the stranger, and making a slight obeisance to Lady Amelia, he stalked away majestically to the further end of the room. There he stood for some minutes, and appeared to cast his eyes to every quarter, in hope of meeting with the object of his search. A deep frown was observed on a sudden to overshadow his countenance, and folding his arms across his body, he darted out at the same door by which he had entered. General Hamilton was now importuned by many of his visitors to give them some clue to the appearance of so extraordinary a character, but he seemed studiously to avoid a full explanation, and contented himself with merely stating that the individual was a foreigner, with whom he had formed an acquaintance whilst he was in actual service on the continent, a man of most eccentric habits, but in other respects of sterling worth, and belonging to one of the most noble families of his country; that he had on that evening called upon him on passing through the city, and had been invited by him to the ball. "Being aware of his character," continued the General, "any interference on my part respecting his conduct would only have roused the natural

acerbity of his temper, and which might have led to some scenes of an unpleasant nature, but we shall be troubled no more with him, therefore let not the amusements of the evening meet with any further interruption."

The world abounds with a kind of suspicious and incredulous spirits, to whom let the most satisfactory information be given to them on any knotty point, yet who are still determined to perceive something more than has been disclosed, and which they are convinced is purposely held back to answer some interested motive. Now this was precisely the case with the information given by the General; a few gave full credence to his statement, and to this perhaps they were induced, because they cared not whether it were true or false, as they did not feel their own interests involved in the question; but, on the other hand, others, who from a more officious disposition considered themselves privileged to probe into the reasons and causes of every action which takes place under their own eyes, although they may be personally as little interested in them as in the affairs of the Emperor of China, formed their little coteries in different parts of the room, and after having, as they wisely fancied, penetrated to the very nucleus of the kernel, they simply arrived at a negative conclusion, in which nine times out of ten amounts to no opinion at all, and they decided that the stranger was *not* Katerfelto the conjuror, nor was he the Wandering Jew, nor was he Mephistophiles to lay the plan for the seduction of another Margaret, who might be in the room: but then what was he? it was enough to

rouse the angry dispositions of a saint, not to be able to solve that question ; and then the look which he cast upon Amelia Fortescue, and his marked attention to her, what could be the meaning of that ? Had he any secret design against her ? perhaps to carry her off, as it would not be the first instance of the kind which has happened at a ball ; and then when the General was observed to enter the antichamber, and after waiting there a short time, to lead out Hector Fitzallan, the tide of wonder began to flow rapidly again, and the question then was as to the nature of the business, which could require the General and so young a man to be closeted, and who appeared to have been selected as the only person in the room worthy of being admitted into the confidence of the General. That the countenance of Hector, on leaving the antichamber, was well calculated to increase the flame of curiosity cannot be doubted, for it did not require the skill of a Lavater to read in his features the workings of a mind ill at ease, and whose thoughts were occupied with very different subjects than those which had any immediate reference to the amusements of the evening. He, however, on a sudden appeared to rouse himself from his abstraction, and mingled with the company as if nothing had occurred to disturb his hilarity. He saw Amelia Fortescue, and the sight of her was sufficient to bring a sunshine even over the most clouded mind, one glance from an eye like hers, beaming with the life-deep passion of a first love, possessed power enough to reduce the most turbulent feelings to tranquillity ; a look from a countenance

less beautiful than hers, if directed by love, has been known to decide the destiny of an empire, how much more so then the fate of a human being.

Whilst lost in the contemplation of the beauty of Amelia, he was suddenly accosted by the sprightly Julia, who for some reason, which Hector could not divine, appeared on that night to single him out as the object of her principal attention. "You appear overwhelmed in thought, Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia, "I hope that nothing has happened to displease you?"

"Is it possible I can be displeased," said Hector, "when I am surrounded by so much beauty?"

"That is a compliment," said Julia, "in which I cannot consider myself included. But why do you not dance? I consider that every lady who is disengaged in the room ought to inflict a very heavy punishment upon you."

"Then suppose," said Hector, "that you commence the operation—"

"With me," said Julia; "it is out of the question. I am but a valetudinarian, and am prohibited from dancing. But can you allow so beautiful a girl as Adeline Gordon to censure you for a want of gallantry? Can you deny yourself the happiness of having her for your partner?"

"I have not the honour of being known to Miss Gordon," said Hector.

"That is a difficulty soon surmounted," said Julia; "I will with pleasure introduce you to her."

"I hope you will excuse me on that point," said

Hector ; " I am engaged to dance with—with Lady Amelia Fortescue."

" Indeed !" exclaimed Julia, with an arch look ; " how happens it then that you are not dancing with her ?"

" It is the dance after the next that I am engaged to her ladyship," said Hector.

" Then why refuse," asked Julia, " to dance the next dance with Miss Gordon, especially as it is her wish ?"

" Her wish !" exclaimed Hector ; " how can that possibly be ?"

" I mean," said Julia, evidently confused, " I meant to say, that it cannot be otherwise than her wish to dance with so accomplished a dancer as you have shown yourself to be."

" You are an adept at flattery," said Hector ; " but although I had made a resolution not to dance until I have the honour of lady Amelia's hand, yet I will not stand guilty in your estimation of a want of gallantry ;" and accompanied by Julia, they proceeded to that part of the room where Adeline Gordon was sitting.

It may be necessary to throw a little light upon the conduct of Julia, as, on the first view, it might appear as the result of mere levity, or rather as the effect of a certain innate mischievous disposition, in which she was too prone to indulge, and which frequently involved her in some very unpleasant predicaments. The handsome figure and gentlemanly deportment of Hector Fitzallan had made a deep impression upon the hearts of many of the female

visitors, but upon no one more so, perhaps with *one* exception, than upon Adeline Gordon. She had seen him in conversation with Julia, and she therefore selected her immediately as the channel of introduction to him. With that ill-founded confidence which young females are too apt to repose in each other, especially in affairs where the heart is concerned, Adeline, after passing an encomium on the personal qualifications of Hector, expressed her wish to be introduced to him; for she saw in him another victim added to her triumphal car, laden with her chains, and subject to her dominion. Perceiving that Hector was not engaged in the dance, she importuned Julia to effect the introduction for her. It was a decisive moment in the life of Hector; his guardian spirit must have been sent on some other errand, and for the time have neglected him, or he would have whispered his admonitions in his ear, and have warned him of the danger he was incurring.

Who is there that has mixed in a certain circle in the Scottish capital, and does not remember Adeline Gordon? With the very mention of her name is associated the reminiscence of all that is lovely and enchanting in the exterior of a woman; but, on the other hand, of all that is hateful and vicious in the interior. The individual whom she favoured with a smile fancied himself the happiest amongst the happy; the youth to whom she gave a glimpse of her bosom saw in it a heaven of bliss. With a figure that would have served the sculptor for the finest model of feminine beauty—with a grace and dignity in all her motions, that bespoke her to be an inhabitant of a

higher sphere—with a voluptuousness in all her gestures that would have thawed the icy heart of age, and raised a flame in the breast of an anchorite; fierce, fiery, and all-consuming as the sirocco of the desert—yet, with all these bounteous gifts of nature, Adeline Gordon was in heart a fiend. If by her arts she could unloosen the bonds of connubial happiness, she was happy; if she could sever two affectionate hearts by her own seductive wiles, or by stratagem or misrepresentation, it was her glory. If she saw a tear drawn from its source by some secret machination, it was her pride; but if that tear were never dried, but remained on the cheek until all colour was flown, and the last ligament of the heart was about to snap and lay the sufferer at rest for ever, then was her victory complete.

And yet, as in all characters of her stamp, she could at times in her actions be great, be noble, be worthy of our reverence. She could soar beyond the ordinary line of human conduct, and be the enthusiast; daring to do what the mere common mind would tremble at. Every thing with her touched the extreme; it was either transcendently good, or infernally wicked. She appeared in her actions to know no medium; she was not a subject of twilight, she existed either in a meridian light, or in Cimmerian darkness. She could appear to be a votary of virtue from a love of virtue itself, and yet it was the mere ebullition of the moment, the ungovernable impetuosity of her passions which urged her to the commission of an act, of which she had never studied the principle nor the end; she appeared to be

governed solely by one power ; and that power was —I WILL.

She delighted in the conquest of a heart, it was not however to give her love in return ; but, having by the irresistible force of her charms enchained the affections of an individual, she would, like the vampire, press that being to her heart, at the same time that she was inflicting a death wound ; she would glory in the pain that she caused, and having driven her victim to the verge of the grave with despair, she would smile at the wreck which she had made, and turn away from the ruin as if unworthy of a thought.

The only child of weak and indulgent parents, from her infancy she had been brought up subject to no control, amenable to no will but her own. The early indications of a vicious disposition were left to grow to exuberance, poisoning every germ of virtue which might otherwise have taken root, and destructive of those principles which ought to be the invariable guide of every female entering into life. The tendencies which a discriminating and prudent mother would have checked as dangerous to the future happiness of her child, were rather encouraged as indicative of a noble and generous spirit. Her father was allied to one of the ducal families of the northern part of the kingdom ; and although in point of fortune he could not be considered as great, yet it was ample enough to support his daughter in her career of pleasure and dissipation, and his noble alliance entitled her to be received into the most select assemblies of the country in which they resided. The constant theme of her doting parents

was her transcendent beauty ; they were continually exalting her as one whose personal charms could not find a parallel—a species of information which a beautiful girl does not require to be given to her if she be but in possession of a mirror. She was puffed up with the conceit that there was not a coronet in the kingdom that would not be laid at her feet, and that royalty itself would glory to see her the partner of the throne. Her education had been entirely superficial and ornamental ; the solid and useful part of human knowledge she rejected as beneath her ; her whole aim and bent were to shine as some uncommonly effulgent meteor in the sphere in which she moved, throwing a halo of splendour around her, and dazzling all her beholders by the brilliancy of her personal attractions. Of religion she knew nothing ; she considered all its institutions and ordinances as so many false and unnecessary checks on the freedom of her conduct, and to none of which she was bound to conform, if they interfered with the gratification of her passions, or the accomplishment of her designs. Thus at the age of nineteen was Adeline Gordon ushered into the world, wild, impetuous, and heedless as the unbroken steed ; all restraint was galling to her ; the friendly monitor who would now and then presume to warn her of the consequence of her indiscretion was certain of being treated with contempt and derision. She considered herself accountable to no one for her actions ; the opinion of the world she affected to despise, and in several instances she has been known to adopt a

particular line of conduct, merely because she knew the unanimous voice of the world condemned it.

But if this woman had ever really loved ; if her heart had ever been animated with the pure, the chaste, the genuine feelings of a sincere and unalterable affection ; if she could have given her whole soul and heart to *one* ; and if she could have acquired the art of bringing her passions under a wholesome control, the man who called her his would have been the envy of his race. She fancied that she had often loved, but it was the wildness of passion unconnected with either esteem or regard ; it was a sirian flame, consuming that which fed it, and that which fed on it ; and to this dangerous character was Hector Fitzallan now introduced.

It were perhaps needless to remark, that if the heart of Hector had not been, as it were, taken by surprise by the bewitching and fascinating beauty of Amelia Fortescue, little doubt exists that it would have yielded to the charms of Adeline Gordon, and that eventually he would have shared the fate of his predecessors ; but notwithstanding the latter threw out all her allurements, and played off all her bewitching arts to bring her victim within the orbit of her power, there yet appeared on the part of Hector a coldness and insensibility which she had not been accustomed to meet in those butterfly characters which were continually fluttering about her, and buzzing in her ear the most fulsome eulogiums on her transcendent beauty. She could not suppose it possible for a youthful heart to withstand the power

of her charms, for every one had hitherto yielded on the first attack, and surrendered to whatever terms she was pleased to impose upon him ; but then she said, " The value of a thing is generally appreciated by the time and trouble it takes in the acquisition of it ; every one can pick up a pebble without much pains, but to obtain a diamond or a grain of gold is the work of time. What ! if I were to give a kiss to every fool that offered me his lips ; would that kiss be valued ? but if I throw out every temptation ; if I lead on the conceited creature, inflated with hope, step by step, and then, at the moment when he thinks himself at the very attainment of his wishes, when in his fancy he has tasted the luscious fruit, then suddenly to withdraw it, and place it, as it were, further from his reach than ever, then my kiss would in his eyes be a Golconda gem ; and, ultimately, to gain it, he would count the stars, and be the very menial, the humble slave crouching at my feet."

Such was the mode of reasoning which this beautiful girl adopted in her own mind in furtherance of her designs on the heart and, it may be added, on the happiness of Hector Fitzallan. It was a prize of no ordinary value, because it could not be obtained at a cheap rate ; it was not a fruit which fell at the first shaking of the bough, and therefore no cankering worm had been gnawing at the core to despoil it of its excellence, but young as she was, she was too well skilled in that particular line of conduct which is so pleasing and flattering to the youthful heart, as to exhibit any open show of what her intentions were. Had a casual observer watched her conduct, he

would have decided it to have been the exact reverse of that which distinguishes the girl bent on the conquest of a heart. She threw out no allurements, she exhibited none of those half wanton, half voluptuous motions, which, whilst they fascinate the senses, lead the heart on by an irresistible power to complete subjection, and to a total absence of all self-control. In her immediate conduct towards Hector she assumed the reserved and repellent tone of the determined prude ; she seemed almost indifferent whether she pleased or not, although conscious to herself at the same time that she was adopting the exact line of conduct most calculated in the end to accomplish her design. Her conversation, so far from having any tendency to the subject which was in reality the nearest to her heart, partook of that frivolity and triviality which are generally known to exist in a ball-room. Yet there was one point to which she wished to draw the attention of Hector, but the introduction of it required some art ; were she to enter upon it abruptly it might engender an unfavourable opinion of her own heart, but she watched the opportunity, and it was not long before it was afforded her. It has been said, that it requires some ability to maintain a conversation for some time with an individual, and particularly a female, who but a few minutes before was a perfect stranger to us, and whose mind may be as different from our own in its attainments and prejudices as the mind of a Newton from that of a Chicksaw savage. It is true that a person may touch upon one and thirty points of the compass of the human mind before he succeeds in touching the

identical one which has the slightest relationship with the ruling one of the individual with whom we are suddenly brought into contact ; and it must be confessed, that there are few situations more irksome and disagreeable than that of racking our brains to discover some topic on which we can converse with our new acquaintance ; to find ourselves foiled in every attempt, and to be answered only by the chilling monosyllable of yes or no ; as if the mind were an isolated point around which not a single idea revolved. The weather is generally a very convenient subject to begin with, as one on which the greatest fool can converse ; but after we have informed our partner that the weather has been very rainy, and she has very politely coincided in the justice and acuteness of our remark, we may perhaps proceed to express our hope that the weather will be fine on the morrow ; and after she has expressed her hope to the same effect, the subject then is generally exhausted, and we stand opposite to each other like two automatons, secretly saying to ourselves, “ What the devil shall we say next ? ”

Fashion is another never failing subject ; but it is one which a man can seldom enter into with a female without running the risk of committing some breach of good manners. If he allude to the shortness of the petticoats as having been adopted to display a beautifully turned ankle, it may happen that his partner has an ankle bestowed upon her by nature somewhat similar to the leg of a horse which has stood for a month in the stable, and the chances are then an hundred to one against him, that he is a

hundred degrees lower in her opinion than he was before the short petticoats were mentioned.

But there is a subject which there are few who cannot converse upon, and which appears to be exactly suited to the meridian of a ball room, and that is slander. It is the very main-spring of conversation; it is the offal on which every mind can feed; it is the sluice which when once opened, no matter how black and feculent the flood, which presents the most ready materials for keeping up a conversation, and the more depraved and degenerate the mind, the more copious are the draughts which are made upon those materials. Thus Adeline Gordon and Hector Fitzallan had not long taken their station in the dance, before the latter had acquired the knowledge of many little traits of some of the characters, particularly of the females, who were then in the room, by which he was neither edified nor instructed. But it was now the time for a particular lady to lead off the dance, and that lady was Lady Amelia Fortescue, and although Adeline Gordon was fully conscious of the extent of her own charms, still there was a monitor within her, who, prompted by envy, whispered to her, that Amelia Fortescue in point of personal attractions was a most formidable rival to her, and with this impression it cannot be expected that she would launch forth into any extravagant encomiums of her; indeed it may be said, that the only portrait that is never flattered, is that which is drawn by a woman of her rival.

The opportunity, however, for which Adeline Gordon had been long looking had now arrived, and

observing Lady Amelia Fortescue at the head of the dance, she said, "What a pity it is that Lady Amelia Fortescue has been brought out so soon in life. I rather think if her parents knew of it, that they would not approve of it."

"Do you not think," said Hector, "that Lady Amelia would prove an ornament to any ball room?"

"That is a mere matter of taste," answered Adeline; "for my own part, she is not a beauty according to the ideal which I have formed of beauty."

"Did that idea first strike you," asked Hector, "when you looked into your mirror this morning?"

"Pardon me," said Adeline, who was secretly pleased at the unexpected compliment, "a mirror always speaks the truth, which is more than can be said of the male part of the human creation."

"What is the eye of man but a mirror," said Hector, "in which the most delightful thing that can be reflected is female beauty? Cannot you see the object that is now reflected in mine?"

"Pray, Mr. Fitzallan," said Adeline, "in what school have you been educated? you never learnt that sentiment within the dusty walls of a college; but I must beg leave to differ with you on one point, and that is, that there is not a more deceitful reflector than the eye of man, for it often pretends to see beauty and perfection where none exist, and then the tongue is prompted by it to declare that which is false."

"That is a perverted vision," said Hector, "for such a vision would see no beauty in the stars of the firmament, nor in the structure of a flower; but with me life

would be a desert as soon as I became insensible to beauty, wherever it presented itself to my eye."

"Then I suppose," said Adeline, "you cannot be insensible to the beauty of Lady Amelia Fortescue?"

"I may admire it," said Hector; "to hope to possess it would be presumption."

"I am informed," said Adeline, "that she has been sent hither under the care of the General and his lady, who are nearly related to her, to complete her education, particularly in music, at the same time that her hand is positively engaged in marriage."

"Engaged in marriage!" repeated Hector, with an embarrassment which did not escape the penetrating eye of Adeline.

"That is a fact," said Adeline, "which is universally known. She is engaged to Sir Henry Montfort: he is now sitting on the sofa conversing with the General's lady."

Hector could scarcely restrain his feelings; he had been during the whole of the evening cherishing hopes, and feasting in his own mind on visions of the purest happiness, when in a moment he saw all those hopes annihilated, and the frost-work of his visions dissolving into nothingness; but he rallied all his presence of mind, and said to himself, It was, it was indeed presumption in me; then addressing himself to his partner, he said, "Has any long attachment subsisted between them?"

"That is a question I cannot decisively answer," said Adeline, "but I suppose the contrary to be the case, for I am informed from another quarter, that

the completion of her education is merely a pretext, and that she has in reality been sent hither, to be thrown into the society of Sir Henry Montfort, whose estate is in the immediate vicinity of this place ; but of what consequence is it whether any attachment exist or not? Sir Henry is a young man of high connexions and opulence, and it is as good a match as Lady Amelia can rationally expect, for although she be the daughter of an earl, she has two younger brothers, to whom the bulk of her father's fortune will devolve."

"But," said Hector, "if no previous attachment exist, is it not an act of direct cruelty to force two young people into a union so serious as marriage, before their hearts have been consulted. I consider such an act to be little short of an actual crime."

"Now that is a sentiment," said Adeline, "that may suit the atmosphere of a college, but it is perfectly consistent with the practices of the world. The interests of families must be consulted, and their dignity maintained."

"At the sacrifice," said Hector, "of every thing that is moral, just, or right."

"Besides," said Adeline, "it may perhaps be as well that she should be married early, for by the accounts which I have heard she is rather flighty in her conduct."

"Then in my opinion," said Hector, who was rather piqued at this aspersion on the character of Amelia, "that is the most forcible argument you could have urged for the impropriety of a speedy union. It were better that such a disposition should

be sobered down before so important a step as marriage is entered into ; and after all, perhaps, that which you have designated as flightiness of conduct is nothing more than the buoyant hilarity of youth ; which, conscious of its own innocence and unsullied purity, yields to the first impulses of its nature, and feels in the ebullitions of its harmless mirth one of the chief blessings of its existence."

At this moment Amelia Fortescue presented her hand to Hector to turn him in the dance, and still shone on her lonely countenance the same bewitching smile, which she had formerly bestowed upon him, it seemed to thank him for the warm manner in which he had attempted to repel the malicious insinuation of Adeline Gordon ; but the feelings of Hector were now of a different character than they were a few minutes before ; he saw no more before him the glowing beauty, which his presumptuous hopes had invited him to believe might one day be his : he saw before him the affianced bride of another. She appeared now to be invested with a sacred character, which his high sense of virtue and of honour would not allow him to profane, and in his eyes it appeared little less than a positive crime either by gesture or by act to encourage a flame, which might eventually consume them both, and lay in ruins the entire fabric of their terrestrial happiness. Impressed with this feeling, the conduct of Hector towards Amelia was stiff, formal, and ceremonious ; it was wholly destitute of any tendency to that familiarity which appeared to be established between them, and which took its rise from that congeniality of sentiment which

brings the kindred mind into closer collision with its fellow, and proves the force of that sympathy which, let the stoic say what he will, is wisely and benevolently implanted in our nature as the foundation of our purest joys.

The eye of a female is of wonderful power, it can penetrate sometimes to the very nucleus of the heart, and read what is passing there, although every attempt be made to keep it unrevealed. Amelia felt the change in the conduct of Hector, and she asked herself to what it was to be attributed : she looked to herself, and saw nothing in her conduct which could have given cause to it ; she looked to his partner, she saw the beautiful Adeline Gordon, and the enigma was at once expounded to her. It must not be supposed that Amelia Fortescue, in her youthful simplicity and innocence was able to analyze the nature of the feelings which then oppressed her, for even to herself she could not define either their origin or their principles ; but so contradictory in its operations is the human heart, particularly that of a girl in the aurora of her life, when the mightiest passion of her nature is beginning to exert its power, that she convinced herself that her feelings could not arise from any particular interest which she felt either for Hector Fitzallan or his partner ; yet if she had been able to dive into the recesses of the actual truth, she would have found that it was that very interest, warm and intense in its origin, by which those very feelings had been excited. Adeline Gordon was on a sudden the object of her most marked dislike, and yet she could not tell why she was so ; they were

entire strangers to each other, and therefore there could not exist any real grounds of offence ; still the heart of Amelia had imbibed the impression, and she never in any future event of her life found reason to alter it.

Hector now almost wished that he had not solicited the hand of Amelia for the ensuing dance ; the charm which had encircled her, bright and glowing as it was in its ephemeral existence, had broken asunder, and a dead, cheerless gloom weighed heavily on his heart ; but the web and woof of his fate are weaving ; an invisible hand guides the shuttle, and not one thread is intermingled which has not its connexion and its purpose.

One of the most important moments in the life of Hector had arrived : Amelia Fortescue was his partner. There was before him a sparkling eye, from which beamed all that was lovely, all that could speak rapture to the youthful heart ; there rose before his own eye a bosom on which an angel might have pillowed its head, and fancied itself in heaven. But still in the midst of those ecstatic feelings there rose, like a demon with its pestiferous breath to dispel them, the agonizing thought—*she is another's*. It threw itself between him and his happiness like the moon between the world and the sun, eclipsing for ever all the brightness of his future life.

That two persons of such acknowledged personal beauty as Amelia Fortescue and Hector Fitzallan should fail to excite the attention of the assembly as they moved down the dance can only be questioned by those who are ignorant of the manners of a ball-

room ; for a person has only to render himself conspicuous by the display of any particular talent, or the commission of any extraordinary act in a public assembly, to make himself immediately the subject of the curiosity of the company, and a thousand conjectures are hazarded, and a thousand inquiries are set on foot to ascertain the place of his birth, the respectability of his connexions, the extent of his fortune ; and on the part of the females the whole generally resolves itself into one question—Is he married or single ?

“ It is a great pity,” said Julia, to a lady who was sitting by her side, “ that Mr. Fitzallan is not of a noble family, and it is also a still greater pity that he will not apply himself to some other profession than that of a minister ; it is one by which he will never make his fortune unless his interest be great.”

“ There are not many of us,” said her companion, “ who would not wish to have him for our father confessor.”

“ And pray what would be the first thing that you would confess to him ?” asked Julia, with that spirit of mischief so natural to her.

“ I would confess to him,” answered the lady, “ that—that—you once put a question to me which I could not answer.”

“ Do you not consider it rather strange,” asked Julia, “ that he should be invited to this assembly, where the company is so very select, especially as I know that he is invited to the fête which the General intends to give in honour of his daughter’s marriage,

and where there will be a greater number of visitors of plebeian rank than are here to-night."

"Perhaps," said the lady, "you could not have addressed yourself to any one in this assembly who is more warmly interested in the fate of that young man than myself."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Julia, "how can that be? I thought he was a stranger to almost every one in the room."

"Not so much a stranger to some," said the lady, "as you suspect him to be; and the time is not far distant when you will wish that you could revoke the sentiments which you have just now uttered respecting him—but, apropos, here comes the General; he shall himself satisfy your curiosity;" and addressing him, she said, "General, this young lady has a particular desire to know how it comes to pass that Mr. Fitzallan is one of your guests to-night?"

Julia now felt the awkwardness of her situation; her inexperience and proneness to mischief had involved her in a dilemma, which could not fail to degrade her in the estimation of her then associates; and it must be confessed, that on the first view, the conduct of Julia may appear as bordering on an officious and unjustifiable interference in the concerns of an individual to whom she was but a few hours before a perfect stranger, but there was a secret spring impelling her to a particular line of conduct; and the sequel will show that she was but an instrument in the hands of another, to effect a particular purpose, but of the ultimate aim of which she was herself wholly ignorant.

“The curiosity of our young friend shall soon be satisfied,” said the General. “I consider, in the first place, that I have not degraded any of my noble guests by the invitation of Mr. Fitzallan. His father was the friend of my youth, and therefore I feel a strong partiality for his son, who appears to me to be a highly meritorious and amiable young man. I grant that there is at present an apparent mystery hanging over him, and it becomes not me to lift the veil further than it is allowed me, or which I know to be consistent with his own interests. He is by no means destitute of fortune, and as to his nobility, it is a question which I will not at present enter upon; but now, my young inquisitive friend,” continued the General, with a display of great good humour, “having satisfied your curiosity, will you be so kind as to answer me one question: What is the reason that you interest yourself so particularly about this young man? If you have a design upon his heart, I am an old soldier, and will point to you the surest way of attack.” The General, fortunately for Julia, was this moment called away; she felt that he had put a question to her which she would have found some difficulty in answering, or at least, if she did not wish to commit herself, she must have had recourse to falsehood; therefore she was by no means sorry when she saw the General hastening away; and the dance being soon after concluded, she joined her friend, Amelia Fortescue, with whom she sat for some time in deep conversation until they were interrupted by Sir Henry Montfort, who appeared with

the scowl of displeasure on his brow, and under the excitement of positive anger.

"I hope," he said, in an ironical tone, "that Lady Amelia is not fatigued with her last dance. I never remember to have seen your ladyship dance with greater spirit."

"It was always a favourite dance of mine," said Lady Amelia.

"Perhaps," said Sir Henry, "not a little depended upon the partner with whom you danced it; a favourite dance and a favourite partner are certainly a conjunction very desirable."

"O, most certainly," said Lady Amelia, who soon perceived the drift of Sir Henry's irony, "I give you all credit for the sagacity of your remark; it shows that your education has not been thrown away upon you. I cannot conceive any thing more vexatious than to have a clodpole for your partner, who is every where, where he should not be, and where he ought to be, there he is never to be found."

"I had rather dance with a bear," said Julia, "than with such a fool."

"But if it be vexatious," said Lady Amelia, "to be tied to such a partner for the short period of a dance, what must it be to be tied to a partner for life, whom you can neither respect nor love, and whose mind is so little as to hate the merit which it cannot reach."

"O horrible! most horrible!" exclaimed Julia; "I should be at cross corners with such a partner during the whole of my life; and before we came to

lead down the middle of it, he would find that it was the falsest step which he ever took."

"May I however ask your Ladyship if some little regard ought not to be paid to the rank and condition of the individual, whom a lady of family may select for a partner?"

"I should consider it a direct insult," said Lady Amelia, "both to the General and his lady in particular, under whose roof I am now a visitor, were I to refuse my hand to any gentleman, who is a guest here to-night. The very circumstance of his having been invited by them is a guarantee to me for his respectability and character."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Sir Henry, who did not expect this forcible reply, "then you would at once throw down all distinctions of rank."

"I know of no distinctions of rank," said Lady Amelia, "under circumstances like the present. I consider that it would have been a most fastidious act in me, and that I should thereby have exposed myself to the just reproof of my friends, if, from a false notion of my superior rank, I refused my hand to any gentleman who solicited it."

"And particularly to one," said Sir Henry, "who is also such a proficient in music. How very edifying! how very grand it is to see a man usurping the place of the woman, and rattling over the keys of a pianoforte, as if it were a feat of wondrous daring. I would whip such effeminates through the world, and send them into the nursery to play with children."

"I admire talent wherever I meet with it," said

Lady Amelia; “and above all, I admire musical talent; but you must give me leave to say, Sir Henry, that there are other persons than yourself to whom I am amenable for my conduct: if I have acted improperly I must expect their reproof. I will not however continue this conversation any longer;—come, my dear Julia;” and casting a severe look of displeasure on the Baronet, she rose with a most dignified air, and joined the party of the General’s lady.

The Baronet stood as if petrified; he had expected to find in Lady Amelia the pliant, docile, obsequious girl, but he now found her to be one of spirit and of pride; he felt himself completely humbled. He had acted upon his supposed right, as the individual who was acknowledged as her future husband, to call her conduct into question; and he had now met with such a rebuff as showed him that the right which he had assumed had no foundation at all; and that he had, in fact, been guilty of a gross act of presumption. Stung with shame at the pitiful part which he had acted, and fearing that his indiscretion might have such an effect upon the feelings of Lady Amelia as to alienate from him even that portion of respect and esteem which she might previously have entertained for him, and thereby close the door to all further intercourse between them, he formed the resolve, and a most inconsiderate one it was, to wreak his vengeance on the object who had been the cause of him thus embroiling himself with his intended spouse.

It is singular, but it daily happens in life, that

many persons, who, although they may be conscious to themselves that they have committed an error, so far from attempting to retrace their steps and repair the evil which they have committed, rush headlong deeper into it; and that which was at first easy of redress, and which perhaps a few words of conciliation would have buried in oblivion, becomes, like the giant avalanche, which was originally but a single flake of snow, set in motion perhaps by the fluttering of the wings of a fly, of destructive magnitude, and the effects of which follow a man through the remainder of his life.

Hector was reclining on a sofa, reposing from the fatigue of the dance, when he was suddenly accosted by Adeline Gordon.

"You will not be offended, Mr. Fitzallan," she said, "at what I am going to say to you."

"Offended! Miss Gordon," repeated Hector. "I cannot conceive how you can suppose that any thing you can say can give offence. There is only one word which I should feel pained to hear from your lips."

"And that word is—" asked Adeline,

"Hate," replied Hector.

"A great deal must happen," said Adeline, "before I can apply that word to you. But listen to me; I regret much that you danced with Lady Amelia Fortescue; I informed you of her engagement to Sir Henry Montfort, and it has excited the anger and mortified the pride of the Baronet."

"Of what consequence is either to me?" asked Hector.

"Perhaps not to yourself," said Adeline, "but it may be to another. I understand some very unpleasant words have already passed between Lady Amelia and the Baronet, and the result may, I much fear, be unpleasant to yourself."

"In regard to myself individually," said Hector, "I fear no consequence that can result from an act, to which not the slightest blame on my account can be attached, but I do most certainly regret that I should have been the innocent cause of any unpleasant circumstance happening to Lady Amelia."

"Perhaps you are not aware of the high aristocratic notions that prevail amongst the individuals who compose the present assembly, and perhaps in no one stronger than in Sir Henry Montfort."

"I had been given to understand," said Hector, "that Sir Henry Montfort was a young man of liberal principles, and of superior understanding. I am sorry his present conduct belies that report."

"Some allowance," said Adeline, "should be made for a man under the influence of love; for a certain great dramatist has said, that the lover and the lunatic are nearly allied; and therefore you have now had an opportunity presented to you of verifying the remark."

"Am I then to consider Sir Henry," asked Hector, "in the character of the lover of Lady Amelia? I knew not of any attachment existing between them."

"Perhaps not," said Adeline, who in the deep part she was now acting, was afraid that she had said too much; "but must not every man before marriage be considered as a lover?"

“Not exactly,” said Hector; “a person may be a suitor but still not a lover.”

“It is a nice distinction,” said Adeline; “but let me now entreat you to allow me to be the mediator between you and Sir Henry; and I am certain that if you will permit yourself to be guided by me, the matter will be allowed to drop as the mere ebullition of the moment.”

“I should be truly happy,” said Hector, “to have so fair an advocate; but you will permit me to say, that I am not prepared to make any concession, ~~nor~~ any acknowledgment of having acted with impropriety.”

“Refrain then,” said Adeline, “from showing any further marked attention to Lady Amelia; do not dance with her again, and the displeasure of Sir Henry will gradually subside.”

“In regard to the displeasure of Sir Henry,” said Hector, “it is to me of secondary consideration; but conscious as I am to myself that the whole of my conduct towards Lady Amelia has been regulated by the most scrupulous attention to propriety, I must be permitted to persevere in that line of conduct until some greater authority than that of Sir Henry steps in to prevent me.”

“And would you not desist,” asked Adeline, “were it the particular wish of Lady Amelia herself?”

“Most unquestionably,” said Hector; “my own sense of propriety would prompt me to do it; but such a mandate must come from her own lips, or from the mouth of those under whose protection she is now placed.”

“And would you not receive it from one,” asked Adeline, “who wishes to warn you of the danger you would incur by persevering in your attention to Lady Amelia, and who cannot be actuated by any other motive than your own interest and welfare?”

“I should hold myself highly indebted to that individual,” said Hector, “for the disinterested interference on my behalf; but as any marked deviation from my former conduct might be construed into a tacit acknowledgment of having committed an error, I would not follow the advice of that individual.”

This dialogue was here disturbed by the appearance of Mr. Bode, who, after apologizing to Miss Gordon for his apparent rudeness, requested Hector to grant him a few minutes’ conversation. There was an unusual anxiety depicted on the countenance of Mr. Bode, and an agitation by no means natural to a man of his grave and saturnine character. The preceptor retired with his pupil to a distant part of the room; and after having conversed for some time, Adeline, who had been a watchful observer of all their motions, saw them privately leave the room.

This act was by no means disagreeable to Adeline, for in some respects it promoted the very end she had in view. She had been informed by Julia of the rather warm altercation which had taken place between Sir Henry and Lady Amelia, and she now saw that an opportunity presented itself of effecting a termination to all intercourse between her Ladyship and Hector Fitzallan. She saw in Lady Amelia a most formidable rival; she dreaded the power of her

beauty ; and although it was universally known that her hand was engaged to Sir Henry Montfort, yet it did not follow, that, as Lady Amelia had now been introduced into life, her heart might not yield to the influence of a first love, and thereby at once overthrow all those arrangements which family pride had instituted for her permanent establishment in life. She knew well that parental authority can give away the hand of a daughter, but that it is another power which gives away the heart ; and that all the splendid advantages which are so vauntingly held forth, or supposed to be derived from a union between two parties equal in rank and opulence, are looked upon by the heart, vivified by love, as mere unsubstantial baubles ; the acquisition of which is not accompanied by any happiness, and all of which would be willingly and joyfully relinquished for the undivided possession of the beloved object. Her penetrating eye had observed, that although the acquaintance between Lady Amelia and Hector Fitzallan was only of a few hours' birth, yet she had secretly watched the motions of both of them, and she perceived what, perhaps, no other eye but that of a woman's would have perceived, that their looks often met each other, and that there appeared to exist between them that sympathetic influence which may be felt, but which cannot be described.

It could not have been foreseen by Lady Amelia that the trifling disagreement which had taken place between herself and Sir Henry should, in a very few minutes, become the general topic of conversation throughout the room, nor perhaps would it have been

the case but for the busy tongue of Adeline Gordon, who having diffused the poison into one ear, hastened to another, until every eye in the room was fixed upon Lady Amelia to try to discover how a beautiful countenance looks when under the influence of anger. Some antiquated ladies (heaven bless them for the liberality of opinion which generally distinguishes them !) saw in this quarrel the forerunner to a complete schism between the betrothed parties ; whilst others were inclined to throw the whole of the blame on Fitzallan, for having so imprudently involved Lady Amelia in so serious an altercation with the individual to whom her future happiness in life was to be intrusted ; for although, and it was well known the dispute was not of an acrimonious nature, nor possessing, perhaps, beyond the immediate moment, the slightest tendency to produce a permanent dislike to each other, yet before the report had travelled half the circuit of the room, it was magnified into a quarrel of the most virulent nature, as one which could not be appeased nor reconciled ; Lady Amelia was represented to have nearly fallen into hysterics, and to have given Sir Henry his formal dismissal ; and this, too, all on account of a plebeian youth, whom nobody knew, and who ought to have been lectured for his presumption in dancing with a lady of title, when there were other ladies nearer his own station in life in the room. The report at last reached the ears of the General. “ Where is then Mr. Fitzallan ? ” he said, looking about the room ; and on being informed that he had retired with his tutor, he exclaimed, “ By heavens ! but that shall not

be ;” and he hastened towards the door. On passing the place near which Sir Henry stood, he said, “ That man will find that he has no common opponent to contend with, who disturbs the peace of my house and the mirth of my company.” On being informed by the servants in the hall that Mr. Fitzallan had returned home, he despatched one of them immediately, soliciting his return ; and adding, that whatever offence he had received should be instantly redressed.

Hector however returned not, and the assembly soon after broke up.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh no I never can forget,
The tones of that sweet voice,
Her words I well remember yet,
They bade my heart rejoice.
And memory still with miser care
Broods o'er them with regret;
Another in this heart may share,
But her I'll ne'er forget.

LADY Amelia retired with her flippant companion Julia to their bed-chamber; but as that is a sanctuary which no masculine eye has yet profaned, it is not possible to disclose the subject of conversation which engrossed the attention of the two females during the operation of undressing. In hazarding the following sentiment we are aware that we may, perhaps, expose ourselves to the imputation of knowing more about such matters than either becomes us in our sexagenarian state, or that we may be willing to confess; but *sub silentio*, we will venture to whisper it, that with a young and beautiful girl, the thoughts which occupied her mind during the ceremony of dressing *before* a ball, are in nine times out of ten, of a very different nature to those which occupy it during the ceremony of undressing *after* it. A ball room is the field of battle in which love gathers the greatest number of its

laurels, and we wish we were not obliged to add, in which innocence counts the greatest number of its victims. The fiends of seduction are there in their native territory, but even their victory was sometimes of difficult attainment until the waltz was introduced. We believe it is Werther who says, that he would not allow the girl whom he loves to waltz with another, even were his death to be the consequence. The innocent girl in the aurora of her youth, with the tide of passion almost at its height, to be whirled round and round under the intoxicating influence of music, heart to heart, bosom to bosom, the arm of the libertine round her waist, and at the moment when the blood is inflamed by the voluptuous motions of the dance, to be pressed closer and closer to him—can it be expected that female innocence can withstand an ordeal like that? The colour that flushes the cheek of the girl under such circumstances is generally taken for the natural glow of exercise, but it is much oftener the blush of maiden innocence at feeling itself in a situation which its innate sense of modesty condemns; it is the officious tell-tale that the first barrier is broken down, that the struggle has begun, and that great must be the power that can prevent the fall. Let it not be supposed that these remarks are to be considered of general application, or that there exist not individual exceptions in which female virtue has withstood the most fiery ordeal to which it may have been exposed; we merely point at the danger, happy are those who escape it.

It has been hinted to us that the conversation of females after a ball generally turns upon the particular

dress which this or that lady may have worn, the jewels which may have adorned her person, the style in which her hair was dressed, and other such like important and interesting matters : it must, however, be recorded that the conversation of Lady Amelia and her friend Julia had no reference whatever to either of those subjects ; but whether any value ought to be attached to this species of negative information must be decided by the particular taste of the individual ; still we admit, that we certainly would have preferred to have had disclosed to us the real subject of their conversation, and it is not improbable that were we to guess at it, we should without much difficulty hit upon the right one ; but as that is a task which every one can accomplish as well as ourselves, we leave it to their own penetrating powers to determine it.

Lady Amelia lay with her head on her pillow, but whether her eyes closed that night with the name of Fitzallan hovering upon her lips, can only be made known by one of those sprites or gnomes, who are said to watch over the couch of virgin innocence, and who are the bearer of its sighs to that power which knows their source, and which in its own good time will send the wished-for relief.

But there was one who sought not sleep, who sat with her head resting on her hand, and meditated on the events of the evening, and this person was Adeline Gordon. Feelings of the most conflicting nature were working within her ; the whole passions of her soul were roused ; she had now no common object to gain, the whole energy of her character was to be put forth,

and accustomed as she was to triumph, no doubt of ultimate success rested on her mind. Plan after plan was projected, and each in its turn rejected to make way for another, perhaps still more preposterous in its nature than its predecessor—still more difficult in its execution. Hector Fitzallan was the point round which all her wishes, all her desires revolved; and perhaps for the first time in her life she felt something within her which might be deserving of the name of love. A flame had been lighted within her, of the intensity of which she had no previous experience; all before had been coquetry in its most extended sense, the genuine offspring of levity and folly; hitherto it had been her aim to excite a passion in the youthful heart merely to make it her sport: now she felt as if she wished to raise a flame in a particular breast, that in her own it might burn with equal intensity. Formerly it was enough for her to say, “He is mine,” and then she would leave her victim in his torments, with the same indifference as the squirrel throws away the shell after having feasted on the kernel. But now a new era appeared to dawn upon her; a bright and glittering prospect opened upon her, by which she thought she saw her future happiness confirmed. She doubted not the irresistible power of her charms, for they were weapons which had ever yet borne away the victory. But then Hector Fitzallan was as yet almost a perfect stranger to her; she knew little or nothing of his former relations in life; and might not an ardent attachment to another be secretly glowing in his heart? There was madness in the

thought. "No," she exclaimed, "he shall not love another, and woe to her by whom he is beloved. She shall become one of misery's dearest children; the tree of her earthly happiness shall not in future bear a single blossom; she shall stand in the world a withered, scathed object, for every passenger to spit his scorn upon. I have heard tell, that there is a point beyond which the human heart cannot suffer, and the next moment brings—what? MADNESS: be it so then; better that than I not gain my end. I swear Fitzallan shall be mine, although every human power be arrayed against me. Tears may flow, and a heart may break. I will revel in my victory, and in the fulness of my enjoyment lose all remembrance of the misery which I may have caused another."

Thus soliloquized this beautiful, but truly vicious girl; the flickering of her taper told her that it was time to retire to rest, but it may be easily surmised that her sleep was neither sound nor refreshing. Dreams of a portentous nature, the offspring of high wrought passion, inflamed her brain, and depicted to her scenes, which in their realization would have placed her on the pinnacle of human bliss; but ever and anon arose between them a dark and threatening cloud, from the womb of which burst forth the lightning, hurled by an invisible hand, and which laid at once the gorgeous fabric of her bliss in ruins. The night passed away, and daylight came but to hurry her on to the execution of those plans, the consummation of which appeared now to engross every faculty of her nature.

Hector Fitzallan was engaged in a very interesting conversation with Mr. Bode, when the servant of the General arrived, inviting him to return to the assembly, but Mr. Bode had many cogent objections to urge to his again joining the company, and Hector himself not feeling disposed to disturb the harmony of the meeting by his presence, wrote the following note to the General:—

“To-morrow with your permission I will wait upon you, and exculpate myself from that charge of rudeness to which I have rendered myself liable by my abrupt departure from your house. I wished, if possible, to avoid an unpleasant rencontre, which from the temper of certain parties would inevitably have been the case, had my stay been protracted. I entertain no fear of any man merely because he bears a title, and you will always find me prepared to teach my enemies how to conduct themselves towards me with propriety and decorum.”

If the presence of Hector at the assembly of the General had in the minds of some of the stiff-starched aristocrats excited wonder and displeasure; that of Mr. Bode was still more unaccountable and degrading. It could not be urged as a pretence for his introduction, that his father was also the friend of the General, and therefore when it was buzzed about that he was nothing more than the tutor of Mr. Fitzallan, the votary of rank bristled up with indignation, and declared it to be a most mortifying circumstance to be obliged to breathe the same air with a person of so mean a condition. In some respects it must be allowed that Mr. Bode was as

much out of his place, as a monk in the dormitory of a nun, or an attorney in heaven,—the gravity and austerity of his manners, his manifest repugnance to join in any of the amusements of the evening, his abstraction from all personal intercourse, and (in the opinion of the females) his downright ugly and repellent countenance, all conspired to make him the object of the ridicule of the wittlings and the contempt of the females. Mr. Bode, however, remained in ignorance of the opinion which was entertained of him, and to which, had he known it, he would no doubt have attached a most extraordinary degree of value. A ball room was to him, as a keen and accurate observer of human character, a field of infinite instruction and sometimes of amusement, a scene replete with deception,—an outward display of mirth and happiness with hearts secretly rankling with misery; the passions of envy, jealousy, and hatred at their height; libertinism and voluptuousness poisoning the fairest flowers of virgin innocence; the vicious strengthened in their iniquity; the virtuous tempted and undone.

It is not to be supposed that the acts and motions of the mysterious stranger, who to the astonishment of the whole assembly had so unceremoniously intruded himself into their society, could have escaped the notice of Mr. Bode. Some confused suspicions arose in his mind that the appearance of the stranger had some reference to the developement of the mystery which hung over his youthful charge, and he was strengthened in that belief, when he remarked the extreme anxiety which the General displayed

when he conducted Hector out of the room. Mr. Bode, therefore, now thought, as he was in confidential discourse with his pupil, that a proper opportunity presented itself of obtaining from him some explanation of the extraordinary circumstance, and particularly of the reason which the General assigned for removing him for a time out of the room. Hector was however any thing but communicative, and, in fact, it must be acknowledged that he had very little to disclose, for the General, during their private *tête-à-tête*, appeared himself to be labouring under an embarrassment, from which he found it difficult to extricate himself. Hector was convinced that the reason which the General gave for withdrawing him from the room was not the genuine one, but he forbore to importune him, for Hector was himself so taken by surprise, that he could not connect his ideas sufficiently to sift the business to the bottom, without infringing the rules of politeness towards the General.

“But,” said Mr. Bode, “it still appears to me exceedingly strange, that the General should have invited us to this assembly;—we were previously entire strangers to him.”

“He explained that circumstance to me,” said Hector, “because my father was one of his earliest friends.”

“That is by no means satisfactory to me,” said Mr. Bode; “indeed in some respects it makes the darkness still deeper, for I consider it as not the least singular feature in this affair, that the General did not disclose himself as the friend of your father before the letter arrived which you received, purporting

to be written by your father himself. There is some connexion between these circumstances which I cannot at present unravel. Events are always dependent upon each other like the links of a chain, and it is very often easy to trace them through their entire dependence, until you arrive at the very origin. It is the discovery of that connexion which often enables an individual to prevent an evil, but at all events it generally enables him to compete with his antagonist on better terms than he otherwise would have been able. In the present instance I am well convinced that the letter of your father and the invitation of the General stand somehow in the closest connexion with each other, and that they have an immediate reference to the attainment of some particular end, but what that end is, is to me an insoluble mystery."

It was the secret wish of Hector to turn this conversation into a different channel, for he was afraid that Mr. Bode might be led by association to allude to the fête which the General was to give in honour of his daughter, and to which Hector himself knew that he was not invited by the General himself, as the signature to the invitation was written in a hand wholly illegible. He also further knew that the cause assigned for the giving of the fête was not the true one; but being no stranger to the extreme prudence and circumspection which distinguished the whole conduct of Mr. Bode, he knew that were he to disclose all he knew on that head, the fears of Mr. Bode might be so magnified, as to induce him to insist upon his remaining at home,

and absenting himself from the fête altogether. He regarded the ensuing fête as one of the most important epochs of his life, for he had been told that his father would be present, and the most sanguine hopes rested on his mind, that he would make himself known to him, and thereby set at rest for ever the doubted point of his existence.

In regard to the insult which he had received from Sir Henry Montfort, he declared to Mr. Bode that he would protect his rights and honour at the expense of life itself. Mr. Bode urged every rational argument to dissuade his pupil from adopting so unjustifiable a mode of conduct; he expostulated with him on the folly of entertaining those chivalrous notions of honour, which prompt a man to place his own life in jeopardy, and perhaps to be the murderer of a fellow-creature, merely because he is *afraid* the world should deem him deficient in courage; but the hitherto pliant and submissive youth appeared on a sudden to be transformed into one of the most obstinate and uncomplying; the internal nature of the man appeared to have undergone a metamorphosis, which was not to be accounted for by all the pedagogic learning which Mr. Bode possessed. Hector was conscious to himself that he had not infringed a single rule of propriety, and therefore he did not consider that any one had the right to impugn his conduct, nor to prescribe to him any rules for that conduct which did not harmonize with his own principles.

This part of their discourse naturally led them to mention the name of Lady Amelia Fortescue, and

Mr. Bode said, "It really appeared to me that the fascinating girl was by no means indifferent to you; your every motion betrayed it—particularly when you were playing on the piano-forte. It seemed as if it were your desire by some magic power to summons to your aid all the spirits which could assist you in the conquest of a young and inexperienced heart. Tell me, was I wrong in my conjecture?"

"No," said Hector, with the utmost candour, "you were not wrong."

"But," said Mr. Bode, "what benefit can all these frost work castles that you are building in the air be to you? a single breath of wind will lay them all in ruins. Will you then be able, when you find all your wishes remain unsatisfied—when a dead and blank reality stands before you, to look with the same carelessness and indifference upon the enchanting but fleeting illusion that is past, with which a child looks upon the bubble, with its momentary beautiful play of colours, and which suddenly vanishes, bursting into thin air. I wish not to disparage either your birth or your station in life, but consider you are but a plebeian, and she the daughter of an earl. She may become the wife of a Sir Henry Montfort, or of any other person of title or opulence, but—never yours."

"My dear Mr. Bode," exclaimed Hector, "you are really begging the question; when did you ever hear me speak of marriage? or when did you ever know me to allude to any lady whom I wished to make my wife? One thing, however, I will own; I acknowledge that I admire the beautiful wherever I perceive

it, and my whole nature must have undergone some strange alteration if I did not revere and almost adore whatever I see that is beautiful in the human form, and you will not surely deprive me of that pleasure? With me beautiful and good are the same, and virtue dwells in both."

"Your premises are just, your conclusions false," said Mr. Bode, "and a little more experience in the world will show you in what that falsity consists."

"At all events," said Hector, "you will allow it to be an innocent enjoyment. Are you not enraptured with the view of the firmament in all its starry glory? but to exalt yourself to it, to make it your own, that is beyond your power. Would you not blame the individual who would attempt to deprive you of that delight, and what would be your feelings towards him, if, because he could perceive no beauty in the object himself, he were to exclude you from the contemplation of it, and stigmatize it as an act degrading to you?"

"I will pardon you, my dear youth," said Mr. Bode, "for the sophistry which you have displayed in meeting my objections, but at least let me advise you not to be solicitous for the society of Lady Amelia, in order that you may not be entangled in the nets of love, and that you will henceforth show her—"

"Yes," exclaimed Hector, interrupting him, "if you will promise me at the same time, that you will never more exalt your look to admire the beauty of the heavens—that you will from this moment forget all your astronomical knowledge, and never think in

future that you ever saw a star. Why should I not delight myself with the contemplation of the charms of an angelic woman, in the same manner as the florist delights in the beauty of his favourite flower? Beauty is the omnipotence of nature, and I its greatest devotee—its most abject slave. Besides, am I to consider Lady Amelia in the character of a snake that will sting me? Has her look the power of the basilisk to lure me to my own destruction?"

"Hector," said Mr. Bode, "listen to your parental friend, to one who may not be long with you. Your passions are awakened, your reason is dazzled, and I much fear that you will fall into some dangerous path, which may lead you to an abyss into which you may fall, never to rise again. It is too often the lot of age to repent for the heedless and imprudent steps of youth, by years of the keenest remorse and anguish. Let me implore you, be not the destroyer of your own happiness."

"My worthy friend," said Hector, "I candidly acknowledge that every thing which you have said, sounds in my ears like the dark and mysterious words of the Sybilline. I cannot conceive any thing more innocent, more noble, or animating, than the inclination which I feel for Lady Amelia Fortescue. She appears to me like a beautiful picture, before which we stand and gaze, and every moment some new, some unexpected beauty bursts upon us. My common reason, however, tells me, that there are no riches in my power which can ever enable me to make that beautiful picture my own, and even when the time comes that I shall not be able to see her

any more, when our relations in life may be altered, and an iron hand has thrust itself between us, separating us for ever, even then I shall think of her with feelings of secret rapture ; her features, her voice, her angel form, no earthly power can eradicate from my memory. I shall still see and hear her when, trembling with age, I stand on the brink of the grave ; when amongst the bright visions of my early days, the splendid stars of my youth, she will shine the most resplendent, the most glorious of them all."

Mr. Bode sank into a deep fit of musing ; and in a few minutes said, in a tone of resolution and the most expressive seriousness, " If you mean to persist in this line of conduct, and will not follow my advice, I have no other alternative left me than to make my appeal to your mother. It will be then for her to determine, whether we shall remain any longer in a place so fraught with danger to the future happiness of her only son, or whether the voice of prudence should not force us to leave it instantly. I will not take so serious a responsibility upon myself, nor will I bear the blame of a guilty indulgence and a culpable silence, when I ought to be most loudly heard."

" Ah !" exclaimed Hector, " I give you all credit for the learning you possess, but I now begin to perceive that the learning of schools is of very little value when we come to mingle in the world. Great is your error if you suppose that a change of place can effect a change in my inclinations. Take me to the hut of the Hottentot, or to the wigwam of the American savage, and I shall take that which is within me,—with me. Though the ocean may divide us, a

thought, quick as the lightning's flash, will in a moment bear me over the vast expanse of waters to the scenes which I have left; and to those who made those scenes so dear to me; I shall then say, the same sun that is now shining upon me illuminates those whom I have left behind me, and I will converse with it as with some secret friend, who will bear to them the sighs of my regret, the declaration of my unalterable affection. If you deem it necessary to complain of me to my mother, I doubt not that I shall be able to justify myself in her eyes. She knows well all the intricacies of the human heart; she is no stranger to my own heart, and she will not hesitate to forgive me; but I should consider it as the first act of injustice which you ever committed towards me."

Mr. Bode offered no remark to the latter rather indiscreet expression of the petuous youth, but he abruptly left the room, leaving Hector to his own meditations. It was the first time that any words bordering on a disagreement had passed between them; and so great was the respect which Hector entertained for his preceptor, that he now almost wished he had been more guarded in his expressions, or that he had shown rather more submission to his counsels. He therefore determined to hasten after Mr. Bode, and to apologize to him for any intemperate expressions which he might have used; but to his very great surprise he was informed by one of the domestics, that Mr. Bode had left the house, declaring that he was going forthwith to the house of General Hamilton.

This circumstance for a moment threw Hector into a state of the greatest perturbation. "To the General!" he repeated. "What possible business can he have to transact with him? at all events it is an act of interference on the part of Mr. Bode by no means justifiable." He now began to reflect that he might have declared himself too explicitly respecting Lady Amelia; and so strange are the fancies of the lover, he thought, that as all his ideas centered in that one object, those of every other person must have the same tendency. At all events, he was fully persuaded that the visit of Mr. Bode to the General had no other reference than to Lady Amelia, and therefore he felt a kind of resentment springing up in his breast towards his worthy preceptor, which but a few hours before he did not think himself capable of feeling. With an anxious heart he awaited the return of Mr. Bode; and he was no sooner informed of it, than he hastened to him, and without waiting for any explanation from him, "I hear," said he, "that you have been with the General, and I suppose I have been made the subject of your conversation; you have perhaps betrayed to him the secret of my love, and you have thereby rendered me ridiculous in the eyes of the world, the consequence of which will be our separation, for I will not endure the shame of it; and is this the use which you make of the secrets which my simplicity and candour have revealed to you?"

"Still, still," said Mr. Bode, laying his hand on the shoulder of Hector in the most friendly manner; "be not so hasty, so intemperate, and, let me add

also, so ungrateful. And could you be so much your own enemy as to separate yourself from me, merely on account of an action of which your blinded reason will not allow you to perceive the friendly motive? I flattered myself your esteem for me was much deeper rooted in your heart; but the time will come when the whole will appear to you as a trifle."

"A trifle do you call it," exclaimed Hector, "to play with the dearest, tenderest feelings of the human heart, and to inflict a wound which no after skill of yours can ever heal?"

"I forgive this ebullition of temper," said Mr. Bode; "but still I characterise it as highly unworthy of you. Your confidence in me should have been unshaken; and, relying on my experience in the world, you should have been convinced, that whatever actions I committed, however harsh and severe they might appear in your eyes, their sole end and aim were your future welfare. Look to my past life, and ask yourself—when or where I was ever neglectful of your interest? and can I of a sudden have so altered my disposition as to avert my view from them, especially when I see you hurrying to the brink of an abyss in which your future happiness will be engulfed for ever. Have I not hitherto watched over you, as over a treasure of inestimable value; and shall in one moment the beauty of a female face defeat all my hopes, disappoint all my expectations, and destroy every vestige of your future tranquillity. Behold, my dear Hector, this is one of the first fruits of your passion; whenever it rages, the blossoms of every splendid virtue decay; pre-

cepts lose their efficacy, and the most solemn duties are infringed. One of the most important crises of your existence is at hand ; you are now standing on one of the crossways of life—one leads to good, the other to evil. You have a monitor by your side who is able to direct you which to adopt ; he takes you by the hand with a parent's feeling ; he reasons with you, he advises you, he implores you, and you turn away from him as from one whom you may have accidentally encountered, and of whose intentions towards you you cannot form a just opinion. Tremble for yourself, my dear youth, before you be obliged to tremble for the calamity which you are inevitably preparing for yourself, if you persist with so much obstinacy in rejecting the advice which I now give you. It is your wish to know the purport of my visit to the General. Have you then been a spy upon my actions ? Is the confidence which you have hitherto placed in me on a sudden so destroyed, that it has become necessary to place a watch upon my motions ? But will you believe me, when I say that the sole motive of my visit to the General was to solicit him to exert his influence to prevent any hostile rencontre between Sir Henry Montfort and yourself ; and I am truly happy to say that I have succeeded to the utmost extent of my wishes ; and so far from having compromised either your honour or your character, I have expressly declared to the General that you were wholly ignorant of my having taken upon myself the character of a mediator. The General by no means disapproved of your conduct ; on the contrary he declared it to be no more than

what he expected from the son of his early friend. To-morrow evening he requests you to pay him a visit."

"To-morrow evening!" exclaimed Hector, whilst a high degree of pleasure was visible on his countenance.

"To-morrow evening," repeated Mr. Bode; "but flatter yourself not with the expectation of seeing any other person than the General."

"Then for what purport is my presence required?" asked Hector.

"I presume not," said Mr. Bode, "to question another as to his motives or his views. I have delivered the message; you may decline the invitation if you please."

"Had your conversation any reference to Lady Amelia?" asked Hector.

"It did not become me," answered Mr. Bode, "to make any allusion to that lady; and I do sincerely hope that this effervescence of your passion will soon subside, and that when your reason has resumed its power, it will evaporate altogether, like the mist from the mountain top, when the light of the sun darts upon it. Now to your rest, my dear youth; and I trust to-morrow that you will rise with different feelings, and that your natural good sense will point out to you the necessity of dismissing from your mind all further thoughts of an intimate connexion between Lady Amelia Fortescue and yourself."

The health of Mr. Bode had been for some time on the decline; and the late circumstances, which appeared to be so closely connected with the future welfare of his youthful charge, had created such an

extraordinary anxiety in his mind, that the malady with which he was afflicted became more severe ; but having now obtained from Hector his solemn assurance that he would dismiss from his mind all intention of prosecuting his quarrel with Sir Henry Montfort they separated for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

We have drain'd the nectar bowl,
Fill'd by pleasure to the brim ;
We have felt the flow of soul,
Till the sense of bliss grows dim.
Joyously the night has pass'd,
But the parting comes at last.

It was midnight, and round a table sat a few young bacchanalians, their spirits elated with wine ; their theme, the praise of female beauty. The glass was quaffed to those rosy lips which they had tasted last ; favours were boasted of which perhaps had never been received, and which perhaps never would be granted. Each fancied that in the lovely rising of the virgin bosom he saw a luscious fruit, swelling to ripeness, merely for himself ; and in the rich and all fascinating developement of the female form, each saw an object from which was to emanate the supremacy of his earthly bliss. The song went round, the hours flew quickly, and every moment the mirth became more obstreperous. At the head of the table sat the Honourable William Monckton, the only son of Lord Dufresne, and one of the most confirmed libertines of the age, a slave to passions of the most dangerous tendency, and wholly reckless of the con-

sequences in which the gratification of them might involve him. His father mingled very little in society, but led the life of a recluse on one of his estates in a distant part of the country. He showed not the slightest disposition to interfere in the affairs of his neighbours—but that was no reason why the neighbours should not interfere with his. Reports were prevalent in the vicinity, that in some of his early relations in life, circumstances of rather an extraordinary nature had happened, which had had the effect of throwing over his temper a misanthropical gloom, that unfitted him for the enjoyment of any of the social amusements of life. He had been long a widower, and yet the female gossips in his immediate vicinity hinted at some female intercourse of a clandestine nature; and, consistently with the opinion which the world generally entertains of such intercourse, it could be nothing but a criminal one. It was further reported, that his only son was designedly kept at a distance from the house of his parent, in order that he might not become privy to certain proceedings, which, according to the construction put upon them by the uncharitable and illiberal, were secretly carried on within the walls of it, to the great shame and scandal of those who were the instigators of them. It must, however, be confessed, that in this instance the world (that is, a space included within about five miles in diameter) had some very good grounds for their surmises, although, in regard to the degree of delinquency with which they invested them, they were decidedly in an error. The effect, however, which this estrangement of the father from

the son produced in the character of the latter was displayed on every possible occasion. Subject to no control, at an age when the passions were at their height, and by nature affected with the most vicious dispositions, he ran the round of dissipation, involving others in the same vortex as himself, and in many instances extricating himself with an extraordinary degree of adroitness, but leaving his companions to abide the forfeit of their guilt. He regarded women as so many fortresses, which were placed in the world for no other purpose than to be attacked and taken; and it must be admitted that he found many, who by their conduct confirmed him in the truth of his opinion; and who, instead of enduring a Trojan siege, fell sometimes at the first attack of the besieger; then having laid the fair citadel prostrate in ruins, he hastened on to the next, to enjoy the same guilty triumph. It is a truth, but perhaps it should not be frequently repeated, that the libertine is by no means an object of dislike to the majority of the female sex; and Monckton knew so well how to throw such a pleasing veil over his principles and designs, that it not only concealed them, but actually imparted to them the appearance of the strictest honour; that which was in him actually passion and vice, acquired the semblance of the most refined, the most tender feeling; that which was in reality sheer arrogance, assumed the guise of a modest consciousness of his merit; and thus, instead of being hated and abhorred by the women, he was their most distinguished favourite. That such a female as Adeline Gordon should fail in chaining such a youth to her

car could not be supposed for a moment, but perhaps never was he more mistaken in the character of a female than in that which he had formed of Adeline; the levity of her manners, the general freedom which she allowed, and particularly her manifest defiance of the opinion of the world, all conspired to instil into him the belief that she was one of those citadels which would not offer any resistance, but would surrender at the first summons. He had however discovered that his calculations were false, and that although he might be allowed to reach a certain point, beyond that all was hermetically sealed against him: and this arose from the consummate art with which Adeline played her part, the whole tendency of which was to deceive her enthusiastic admirer as to the real sentiments of her heart towards him; but he possessed not the sagacity to see through it, much less the skill to turn to his advantage any of those weaknesses, which even the most artful woman will sometimes exhibit at a time when she thinks herself the most secure. The circumstance of her having danced with Fitzallan had greatly offended him, and he had ventured to express his sentiments on that subject to her in terms of rather a haughty and imperious nature, such only indeed as the superior would use to his dependant. But Adeline was a most finished coquette; she appeared to listen with the greatest attention to the animadversions of Monckton; she even coincided in the truth of many of his remarks, and a few moments afterwards he beheld her seated by the side of Fitzallan, conversing with him in the most familiar and playful

manner, and deporting herself towards him as if their acquaintance had been of long duration. She had purposely forborne to inform Fitzallan of the illiberal remarks which had been made by Monckton, from a fear that it might lead him to relax in his attentions towards her, and even perhaps to withdraw himself altogether from her society. It was on the same principle that she had informed Fitzallan of the remarks which Sir Henry Montfort had made on her dancing with Lady Amelia, from the false idea that he would so far pay respect to them as not to offend a second time ; but she found that Fitzallan was not one of those milk-and-water characters, who, having no fixed principles of their own, are wheeled and whirled about by the opinions of others with the same servility as the vane turns with every breath of wind that assails it. Not that Fitzallan was at all lowered in the opinion of Adeline by the proud manner in which he received the information respecting Sir Henry ; on the contrary, it rather exalted him in her esteem, for it showed her that she had to do with a character of a very different calibre than those which she had hitherto been accustomed to bend to her will, with the same facility as if they were so many half-grown saplings ; and the only question now with her was, what particular line of conduct was she to adopt, to bring so haughty and resolute a character to submission. The greatest happiness of Adeline was to keep her rivals in a continual state of excitement, hovering between hope and fear ; and although she had not yet received any proofs of the effect which her beauty might have

made on the heart of Fitzallan, yet she knew well that the hearts of men resemble flowers, some of which open their calyx immediately to the beam of the sun, whilst others appear unwilling to imbibe the genial warmth; but the influence at last prevails, and the irresistible power stands triumphantly confessed.

Little, however, did Adeline think how closely the fate of Fitzallan was interwoven with that of Monckton, nor did she entertain any idea of the dreadful consequences which would ensue, were she to implicate either of them in any act of a questionable nature, or in which their honour or their character might be concerned.

It was generally known that Monckton was one of the most ardent admirers of Adeline Gordon, and at the same time her most abject tool in the prosecution of any of her intrigues. There was no action too mean or base to which he would not lend himself to obtain a smile from the idol of his heart; and so great was his vanity, so weak his penetration, that he fancied himself the object who stood the highest in her affections, and that he had actually so far gained her love as to entitle him to consider himself certain of obtaining her hand whenever circumstances would admit of their union. He was one of the visitors at the ball given by General Hamilton, and had observed the marked attention which Adeline had paid to Fitzallan, and from that moment he imbibed an inveterate hatred for him, and suffered no opportunity to escape him by which he could degrade him in the opinion of those with whom he associated.

"I thought," said one of the bacchanafians, "that Fitzallan was to be here to-night."

"The dull, prosing philosopher," exclaimed Monckton; "he is fitter for the cloisters of a monastery than the circle of a set of jovial fellows like ourselves. I verily believe the simpleton would turn his look away from the bosom of a girl; but, by heavens! he was a happy man last night; he danced with the two loveliest women in the room; and by the great toe of the Pope if I do not think that Lady Amelia Fortescue has fallen in love with him."

"And why not Adeline Gordon also?" said another; "was she not continually flirting with him?"

"Curses on him," said Monckton, "but I'll take care he never makes an impression in that quarter. Fill a bumper, my boys—Here's to Adeline Gordon."

The name of Adeline Gordon sounded throughout the room, and high were the encomiums that were passed on her beauty.

"I think that the man," said one, "who has her bosom for a pillow must have some foretaste of heaven."

"Heaven!" exclaimed Monckton; "that man must be a fool who wishes to go there whilst Adeline Gordon is on the earth. It is heaven where she is."

"I think," said another, "if she had been amongst the hundred and fifty virgins who tempted St. Augustine, the blockhead of a saint would not have withstood the temptation."

'What!' exclaimed Monckton, "it would be a

scandalous profanation to know Adeline Gordon in the arms of a monk."

"You had rather know her in the arms of a Monckton," said another; "would you not?"

"And, by heaven!" exclaimed Monckton, "but that shall one day be the case, when that old curmudgeon of a father of mine is gone to keep company with the angels—then, my boys—huzza!—Adeline Gordon shall be mine. But, come Campbell, give us our favourite song; and then to our homes."

SONG.

The girl we love in our arms,
 The sparkling glass in hand;
 'Twas thus our sires spent their time
 In this our Fatherland.
 And we will not to cowards sink;
 Like them we'll ever love and drink.
 Then fill, and drink, and fill.
 Then fill, and drink, and fill.

Duetto.

And we will not to cowards sink;
 Like them we'll ever love and drink.

Chorus.

Then fill, and drink, and fill.
 Then fill, and drink, and fill.

Our fathers are in their graves,
 The worms have had their prey;
 But why should that disturb our joy?
 Like them we'll have our day.
 We'll raise the ruby goblet high,
 We'll taste the bliss from woman's eye.
 Then drink, and love, and drink,
 Then drink, and love, and drink.

Duetto.

We'll raise the ruby, &c.

Chorus.

Then drink, and love, &c.

Then what is life if wanting love?

A desert void of bliss;

The heart's a world without a sun,

That knows not woman's kiss.

'Tis wine that drives all care away,

'Tis love that makes this life so gay.

Then love, and drink, and love,

Then love, and drink, and love.

Duetto.

'Tis wine that drives, &c.

Chorus.

Then love, and drink, &c.

The song was scarcely concluded when a servant entered the room, informing Mr. Monckton that a stranger without desired to speak to him, but that no entreaty could induce him to enter the house.

There may be perhaps in the human soul a pre-scient power, which at the very time when the senses and the understanding are in a state of obscurity is then most efficiently employed in nourishing itself with conjectures and probabilities, and therefrom composes certain results, which we call presentiments, because we have perceived neither the origin nor the gradual growth of the train of our ideas. That Monckton could not at the moment define his feelings when the message was delivered to him may be traced to the predominant passion of his character, and to the excitation which the copious draughts of

wine had occasioned in his brain. He felt, however, as if there were some malignant influence abroad, working on his spirits; for, from a state of high excitement, he sank suddenly to one bordering almost on despondency and fear. He rose gravely from his chair, heedless of the jokes and sneers of his companions, and left the room. At the outside of the house he beheld a tall figure patrolling up and down, muffled in a long travelling cloak, and his visage so concealed that his features could not be distinguished.

"Is it to me that you wish to speak?" asked Monckton.

"It is with you, William Monckton, that I wish to speak," said the figure.

"Your business, then,—" said Monckton.

"Is of an important nature," said the figure; "and I command your obedience to my orders."

"A power to command me," said Monckton, "implies on my part a duty of submission; and that is what I do not acknowledge. I admit of no control over my actions, of no foreign interference in my concerns."

"It were better for you if you had," said the figure; "but before we part, I think you will find that your independence is not so unlimited as you suppose. To my business; the time grows on apace. You are invited to the fête which is to be given in a few days by General Hamilton?"

"And supposing that to be the case," said Monckton, "what right have you to interfere in it?"

"I have so far a right to interfere in it," said the

figure, "that I prohibit you from appearing there on that evening."

"Indeed!" said Monckton, with a contemptuous sneer; "and may I ask what monarch has sent you as his plenipotentiary with his mandate to interdict me from accepting the invitation of the General?"

"I'll not have my right questioned," said the figure; "it is sufficient for me to know that I possess it."

"I know but one individual in the world," said Monckton, "who would pretend to urge his right to control my actions, and he is afar off."

"And would you obey that individual were he here?" asked the figure.

"If he gave me a substantial reason for it," said Monckton, "perhaps I might."

"And supposing it were his mere caprice," asked the figure, "would you then attend to it?"

"No," said Monckton. "I have never been taught to bend to the mere caprice of any man; I have nothing of the girl in my constitution."

"The matter is however determined," said the figure; "you shall not attend the General's fête. It is your father who commands you."

"My father!" exclaimed Monckton. "Is not this an illusion? My father! I am quite bewildered."

"You now know me," said Lord Dufresne; for it was himself. "Ask from me no explanation for this my most unexpected appearance; the womb of time is teeming with strange events, and you are not a little implicated in them. Be satisfied that it is

not a trifling occurrence which has drawn your father from his solitude ; and I now warn you, how directly or indirectly you give any personal annoyance to Mr. Fitzallan."

" And why not," asked Monckton, " to that individual in particular."

" It is my will," said Lord Dufresne. " I depart to-night ; attend to my commands, and beware of Adeline Gordon."

" How ! what !" exclaimed Monckton, overcome with surprise. " Adeline Gordon ! what know you of her ?"

" Enough to entitle me," said Lord Dufresne, " to warn you of her. Reform your conduct, and you will find in me a father ; until then, never. Farewell." His lordship stalked away, and was soon lost to the view of his astonished son.

Monckton stood for a few minutes to collect his scattered thoughts ; for this most sudden and unexpected appearance of his father had so disconcerted him, that he began to think that the whole was some illusion, caused by the fumes of wine working on his brain, and yet the next moment told him that there was too much reality in the whole scene to admit of it being questioned. He became distracted with doubt and uncertainty, and he began to examine the extent of parental authority, and to bring it within its proper limits. He had long considered it as an established principle, that there was a point beyond which filial obedience cannot be exacted ; and in his own mind it was decided that this was a case which fell immediately under that character. He saw not

by what natural right his father had interdicted him from attending the General's fête, and therefore he determined not to conform to it. He had there promised himself the enjoyment of the society of his beloved Adeline, and she had assured him, and which he was credulous enough to believe, that she looked forward to the evening when they were to meet with the most heartfelt delight; and were all these golden visions to be swept away in a moment by the mere capricious mandate of a parent, and who perhaps had no other reason to give for his actions than his bare caprice? His spirit spurned the idea of such a tame submission to the assumed authority of a parent, and therefore he determined to act in opposition to it. He returned to his companions, but his wonted flow of spirits appeared to have forsaken him; to all the inquiries as to the cause of the sudden change in his manners he gave an evasive and sullen answer, attended by the most marked ebullitions of anger on finding himself thus importuned. The hilarity of the company being now disturbed, the party soon afterwards broke up; and each reeled home, keeping his equilibrium as well as his comparative state of intoxication would allow him.

: The hour was now arrived for Hector to repair to the house of the General, in pursuance of the invitation sent to him through the medium of Mr. Bode, but previously to his leaving the house, he repaired to the room of his preceptor, whom he found seriously indisposed, and who excused himself on that account from attending him. "My anxiety," said Mr. Bode

to him, "respecting your future interests is great in the extreme. I can but offer you the counsel of a friend, and tranquil would be my last moments if I thought that you would act up to it. Let your reason be your guide, and suffer yourself not to be led away by a syren's voice, which can only lead you to your destruction. I know well the power of female beauty over the youthful heart, but it is either the bliss or the curse of life. Your Mentor cannot be always at your side, but let me entreat you so to regulate your conduct, that I may look upon you as my Telemachus, and as such, esteem and respect you. I cannot sufficiently impress it on your mind, that you are now verging towards the most important period of your life; one false step, and you are irretrievably lost for ever. Now go, my dear youth, and may the God of the good attend you."

These expressive words still sounded in the ears of Hector as he pursued his way to the house of the General, and he looked upon them as some prophetic admonition breathed by a guardian spirit to some valued charge. He determined to act in conformity to the advice which he had received, but he no sooner came within sight of the residence of the General, than, as if by some talismanic power, one thought alone expelled all that he had heard from his mind; and that thought was—Amelia Fortescue. The resolve which he had taken the moment before was suddenly lost sight of, and the counsels which he had heard faintly vibrated on his mind like the low cadences of the Eolian harp, dying away into silence. He was received by the General with every demon-

stration of friendship ; but there was one for whom his eye was continually in search, yet how greatly was he deceived in his hope. One moment after another passed, and still no Amelia made her appearance. Her name often trembled on his lips, but he ventured not to make any inquiry after her. So timid and bashful are the first feelings of a genuine love.

It has been beautifully said by Schiller, that it is sweet to breathe the air in which a beloved name is mentioned ; and they only are able properly to appreciate the feelings which swayed the breast of Fitzallan, who have felt the secretly pleasing influence which the idea diffuses over the heart, that although not actually present, they are still breathing the same air under the same roof as the object of their affections.

The non-presence of Amelia may however, in a great degree, be attributed to Amelia herself, or rather, perhaps, still more to the loquacity and indiscretion of Julia. The observant eye of Mrs. Hamilton had been upon the alert during the whole of the night of the ball ; and that perhaps which she did not, nor could not see herself, others were so officiously kind as to see for her, and to buzz it in her ears as a most decided proof of their superior penetration. Mrs. Hamilton knew that it was the first public appearance of Lady Amelia in a ball-room, and therefore she determined to watch her motions most narrowly, to discover if she seemed to give the preference to any particular individual ; and it did not escape her that the look of Lady Amelia was frequently directed towards that part of the room where Fitz-

allan then happened to be, and consequently no other construction could be put upon that marked attention of her ladyship, than that Fitzallan had made a deep impression on her too susceptible heart. Mrs. Hamilton was further strengthened in that unpleasant suspicion by the exuberant eulogiums which Lady Amelia bestowed upon him on the following morning at breakfast. He was, in her opinion, the Adonis of the evening; and she hesitated not to declare that there was something so manly, so noble, and withal so open and fascinating in his manners, that she actually turned away with disgust from the empty coxcombs who fluttered around her, and who seemed to think that they were to be valued according to the *outré* fashion of their dress, or the effeminacy and silkiness of their deportment. These praises were as bitter as wormwood to Mrs. Hamilton, and it was her fixed opinion that a rising attachment of that kind should be nipped in the bud before it had taken so deep a root that it could not be afterwards eradicated. It may sometimes happen that an individual will by chance light upon a particular routine of conduct to be adopted towards another, without at the same time possessing any knowledge, whether such line of conduct be applicable to the intrinsic character and dispositions of the individual, and whether, in reality, it be not the very one which of all others is the least calculated to produce the desired end. The character of Lady Amelia was apparently gentle and mild, but it was actually full of fire, of feeling, and of passion; she was of that warm and glowing nature, that if love once vivified her heart, she would become

an enthusiast, a very martyr to it, discarding from her mind every thought which had no reference to it, and bounding proudly over every obstacle which family pride, or personal interest, might throw in her way. She had been intrusted to the care of Mrs. Hamilton for the express purpose of preserving her from any illicit attachment, as the precise period of her marriage was fixed upon, and now the greatest risk was run of that very circumstance taking place, which it was her chief aim and duty to prevent.

Nothing therefore could be more galling to the feelings of Mrs. Hamilton than to discover that Lady Amelia was involved in a love affair, and that too with a young plebeian, of no family, of no fortune, and who on that very account could never be her husband. She therefore considered it to be her duty to warn Lady Amelia against forming any attachment either to Fitzallan, or indeed to any other person, and she secretly commissioned Julia to keep a strict eye upon her, and to convey to her immediate information of any act of a clandestine nature which might take place between Lady Amelia and Fitzallan. Mrs. Hamilton was, in the true sense of the word, a very good sort of a woman; but every good woman is not a wise woman; and no more striking proof could be adduced that she was not the latter, than the commission which she had intrusted to Julia. It was a preposterous idea to suppose that a girl of the volatile and intriguing disposition of Julia should on a sudden enact with fidelity the part of the vigilant matron, or the watchful guardian of the Hesperian fruit, and such a luscious fruit too as

Lady Amelia exhibited herself. The only excuse therefore that can be made for Mrs. Hamilton is, that she was actually ignorant of the real character of Julia, and that she did in reality suppose that she would enter as warmly as herself into the precautionary measures which were to be adopted on a business of such vast importance. Julia, however, undertook to further the views of Mrs. Hamilton, although in her heart she determined to remain faithful to her friend. This conduct may appear not exactly justifiable in the eyes of the rigid moralist, and will no doubt draw down upon the head of Julia the bitter censure of the confirmed prude; but we pretend not to draw our characters as the Chinese their faces, without the slightest shade; for although we know that there is much of heaven in the composition of man, ay, and of woman too, yet we also know that it is strongly amalgamated with much that is natural to another and a lower place. The brightest parts of a picture are rendered more prominent and beautiful by the comparative depth of the shades, and we are not quite certain whether the virtues of a woman be not rendered more striking and impressive by 'hose little *égaremens* to which the sex are so addicted; at all events it is sometimes those very wanderings which render them so dear to us.

It was on the morning of the day that Fitzallan was expected at the General's, that Mrs. Hamilton, Lady Amelia, and Julia were sitting in the boudoir of the former, when she formed the resolution of commencing her system of coercion with Lady Amelia; and addressing her in rather an authorita-

tive tone, she said, "It is my wish, Lady Amelia, that you confine yourself during this day to your own apartment, you appear not to have completely recovered from the fatigue of the ball, and your health is of the first importance."

"I have no reason," said Lady Amelia, "to complain of the state of my health; and as to the fatigue which I endured at the ball, one night's rest wholly restored me; therefore if my health be the only cause of my confinement to my room, there will be no necessity for your precautionary measures. Perhaps you may be in expectation of some particular visits to-day at which my presence may not be agreeable."

"I make no doubt," said Mrs. Hamilton, "that we shall see Sir Henry Montfort."

"As to Sir Henry," said Lady Amelia, "he must be considered as my shadow. But is no one else expected?"

"I think I heard the General say," said Julia, "that he expected Mr. Fitzallan this afternoon."

"Well," said Mrs. Hamilton, casting a severe look of displeasure on Julia, "and supposing that to be the case, how can it in the least concern Lady Amelia?"

"Not particularly," said Lady Amelia, with an assumed indifference, and averting her face from Mrs. Hamilton; "but I must own I should like to hear him play again the fantasia of Mozart."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Hamilton, archly, "but let me remind you not to forget the aim for which you were sent hither; and let it be your first consideration, circumstanced as you are in regard to Sir Henry

Montfort, to deport yourself towards all other young men with the greatest reserve."

"I am not conscious," said Lady Amelia, with becoming pride, "that any part of my conduct should have exposed me to that reproof; and in regard to Sir Henry, I believe him to be a very worthy young man; but I know not how to account for it, I do not think I shall ever like him as my husband."

"How! what!" exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton, rising from her chair, her cheeks reddening with anger. "Did I hear aright? Is it possible that what you have now said are the real sentiments of your mind? and are the plans which your parents have laid down for your future happiness to be overthrown; their dearest hopes frustrated in a moment by the mere caprice of their disobedient child?"

"Perhaps," said Lady Amelia, "their ideas of what may constitute my future happiness may be founded on wrong principles."

"Impossible, foolish girl," said Mrs. Hamilton; "their prudence has selected for you one of the most eligible matches in the country."

"In which," said Lady Amelia, "my own heart is to have no voice whatever."

"It is impossible," said Mrs. Hamilton, "not to esteem the individual who is destined to be your husband."

"Is there nothing more than esteem requisite," asked Lady Amelia, "to render the married state happy?"

"It is the very foundation of matrimonial happiness," said Mrs. Hamilton; "but at present I will

not pursue this conversation further. I shall consider it my duty to apprise your parents of the sentiments which you have just now expressed, and I shall know what advice to give them. Now retire to your room."

Lady Amelia obeyed the order ; but the result of this conversation was, that she formed the resolution never to give her hand where she could not bestow her heart.

Whatever may be said of the caution and the precaution of parents and relations, when the affections of those intrusted to their care are concerned, it seldom happens but that the ingenuity of love triumphs over both ; and it cannot be doubted that an extreme vigilance is often the parent of a thousand stratagems and artifices which never would have been thought of, nor projected, but for the severity of the restrictive measures which it has been thought proper to adopt. The confinement of Lady Amelia to her room was, by the worthy Mrs. Hamilton, considered to be the very quintessence of a sound and discreet judgment ; and the idea of setting Julia as a guardian over her, was, if possible, a conception of a still brighter cast ; but love is like the watery element, the greater the opposition the greater the force ; and amongst the singularities of this most singular world, it is not the least singular, that a woman who has passed the ordeal herself should not retain some remembrance of what her own feelings were on the arrival of that most important of all moments in the life of a female, when the heart is called upon to submit to the first impulse of a mighty passion, and

that she should not recollect how ineffectual and abortive were all restraint and control that might have been attempted to be exercised towards her. Had Mrs. Hamilton taken the trouble to read only one page of the history of her early life, her conduct towards Lady Amelia would have been the direct reverse to that which she adopted ; for the very circumstance of her ladyship being restricted from seeing Fitzallan only tended to make her think the more of him ; and it had also further this injurious tendency, that it instilled an idea into the head of Julia, which said idea is not an original one, for it has floated in and inflamed the heads of hundreds of love-sick girls before her time, that as it appeared some strong control was to be exercised in preventing all free and open intercourse between Lady Amelia and Fitzallan, the question then naturally presented itself—in what manner it could be accomplished in a secret and clandestine manner ; and this is nine times out of ten the immediate result of an opposition to the affections of the heart, nor does it require two apprenticeships in the school of man, not to know what is the general result of those clandestine meetings. In the patriarchal ages, when nature only was the guide, and the factitious and ceremonious institutions of what is termed civilization were unknown, love had only one place of assignation ; and that was some sequestered spot, where no eye but that of heaven could penetrate, and where that same heaven gave its assenting smile, rejoicing in the bliss of its creatures ; but in more modern times, fashion, and, we might add, a lax and degenerated system of morality

have invented other places, such as bazaars, exhibitions, theatres, confectioners, and milliners' rooms; and last of all, the most convenient, as being the least suspicious, having the cloak of religion to cover them—the conventicle of the Methodist and the Independent, and the church of the Orthodox. It was to the latter that Julia determined to bend her attention; for she had only to discover to what church Fitzallan resorted, to enable her at once to carry her plans into execution, and the result will show what an artful and intriguing girl is able to accomplish when she has once set her mind upon it. The female mind is infinitely inventive when the subject is the conquest of a heart. A woman of art and stratagem can impart a power to every thought, to every word a fire, to every look a dagger, to every tear (if it be her will) a despot's power. An artful woman can merely, by the force of her artifice, effect that in a moment on which the whole acuteness of our own sex would have laboured in vain for a century.

It was doubtless owing to the sentiments which Lady Amelia expressed in her conversation with Mrs. Hamilton, and which she lost no time in communicating to the General, that the latter considered it his duty to give the following admonitions to Fitzallan. For some time their conversation was of a desultory nature, touching on subjects of little or no interest to either; but Fitzallan evidently perceived that it only required a single expression to bring the General to the real subject, for which he supposed his presence was required. Fitzallan studiously

avoided giving the General any opportunity of introducing it; for although it was uppermost in his heart, so contradictory and inconsistent are often the operations of the human mind, yet he wished not to enter upon it at all, but the General adroitly brought it about by saying, "It was delightful to me to see such a blaze of female beauty around me on the night of the ball. I can remember the time when I should have fallen at the feet of a girl like Adeline Gordon."

"There is a great difference, General," said Hector, "between a proud commanding beauty, who seems conscious of the charms she possesses, and who throws out her allurements with the sole view of a conquest, and the retired, unassuming one, who captivates us by her simplicity, and enchants us by her diffidence. The former I can compare to the gaudy, gorgeous tulip; the latter to the drooping, modest snowdrop."

"You are perhaps right in your principles," said the General; "but under such circumstances we are not always under the subjection of self-control. It appeared to me, however, as if Lady Amelia Fortescue made a deeper impression on you than Miss Gordon. Nevertheless I deem it right to inform you, that there are some objects so far above us, that it becomes presumptuous in us to attempt to reach them; it is prudent in us to regulate our wings according to the flight which we have to take. Particular circumstances, which I am not at liberty at present to explain to you, attach me strongly to you, therefore it would give me great concern, if by any part of your future conduct you were to place me in

the dilemma of saying some severe truths to you. For your future guidance, however, let me assure you, that the hand of Lady Amelia is no longer free, and therefore you must henceforth look upon her as a sacred character."

"General!" exclaimed Fitzallan, overcome with surprise at the speech which he had heard, "I am utterly at a loss to conceive what can have given rise to the idea in your mind, that I entertained the most distant thought of paying my addresses to Lady Amelia. Was any part of my conduct at the ball of so striking and unequivocal a nature as to give you any just grounds for the serious admonition which you have just given me? I have examined it minutely, and I find nothing in it either suspicious or deserving of reproof. But, General, you have only to command, and I will never again touch the threshold of your house."

"Not so hasty, my dear young man," said the General; "you have wholly misunderstood me. A little wholesome advice given at a seasonable time is of golden value when it is profitably made use of. It is my wish to see you often at my house, but that can only take place under certain conditions and restrictions, to which your own good sense will show you the propriety and the necessity of conforming. You will therefore confer on me a particular favour, if at the ensuing fête, you will not dance with Lady Amelia more than once. You know not the world as well as I do; it has an evil, suspicious eye, and a still more base and poisonous tongue."

"You have only to express your wish," said Fitz-

allan proudly, "and I will absent myself from the fête altogether. I find no pleasure in an assembly where I am obliged to regulate my conduct according to the whims and humours of other people."

"Rather than you shall absent yourself," said the General, "Lady Amelia herself shall not attend the fête."

"If I am to be the cause of Lady Amelia being deprived of the pleasure which she anticipates on that evening," said Fitzallan, "I will most assuredly absent myself."

"Your attendance is most indispensable," said the General; "the reason of it I am not allowed to disclose to you. It is your birth-day, and—" the General suddenly checked himself,—“but as your friend, I wish to warn you of the danger into which you are likely to fall, and I thereby obviate all chances of an open rupture between us."

"I will take care so to regulate my conduct towards every one," said Fitzallan, "that at the same time that I will not give any offence, I will not receive an insult without revenging it."

"No more at present," said the General; "we will now retire to the supper room."

This was music to the ears of Fitzallan; he doubted not that he should there see Lady Amelia, and he entered the room with the General, his heart palpitating with the excess of his feelings, but fearful at the same time that his embarrassed demeanour might betray him to the company. On his entrance no person was present but Mrs. Hamilton and two other ladies of a particular condition in life, who

having passed their grand climacteric "in a state of single blessedness," are generally to be seen at the quadrille table, and on the following morning are observed going the round of their acquaintance to disclose any new discovery which they may have made in the private affairs of a family, and to edify each other with their praises of the great advantages and delights of the virgin state. That Fitzallan should not find himself at home in a society like this may be easily conceived, for he had not yet learnt the difficult art of adapting himself to whatever company he might be thrown into; and certainly it must be allowed that the society of an Amelia Fortescue or an Adeline Gordon possesses greater charms for a youth of twenty, than the cold, stiff, formal demeanour of the antiquated prude. Fitzallan was not intimately acquainted with either of the visitors of Mrs. Hamilton, although he knew one of them to be a walking synonyme for scandal; and if there had been such an office as a purveyor of calumny to the royal family existing amongst the many useless ones for which the people of this country have to pay for the maintenance of the dignity of royalty, (and why not a purveyor of calumny as well as a purveyor of asses' milk, both of which we know to be equally palatable to certain of the royal tastes,) this lady would have far outstripped every candidate that might have presented herself for the office. She could not endure to behold the sparkling eye, the rosy cheek, and the redolent bosom of the youthful beauty. She saw in the first something that she would not tell, in the second something that she could

not tell, and in the third something that should not be told at all. But when she combined all the three, and saw them in lovely union in one person, that person was immediately to her the object of her most inveterate hatred, and no opportunity was lost of vilifying and deteriorating her character. In fact, this lady was one of those pests of social life which strew their mildew over human happiness; and who, writhing under their own disappointed hopes, gloat themselves with the destruction of another's joy.

Whilst the general had been closetted with Fitzallan, Mrs. Hamilton and her two visitors had been discussing the respective merits of the several female authors by whom the present age is so distinguished, and the triumvirate (if we may be allowed the iricism) had definitively settled the point that Miss Landen, in her novel of *Romance and Reality* had shared the same fate as Walter Scott when he wrote his *Battle of Waterloo*, at which

None fell by sabre or by shot,
One half so flat as Walter Scott.

And further, that Mrs. Barry Cornwall Wilson, in her *Anacreontics*, (which, *en passant*, is rather a curious department of poetry for a lady to enter upon,) as well as in her amatory effusions, ought to be arraigned at the bar of criticism for her wilful murder of English grammar; and they were proceeding to recommend to Mrs. Hemans, in the formation of her couplets not to let one line march upon stilts, whilst the other comes limping, hobbling after, as if it had not a *foot* to stand upon, when the door

opened, and the General and Fitzallan presented themselves.

The literary disquisition ended with the appearance of the gentlemen; and Mrs. Figgins, (who can deny that there is something highly literary connected with the name?) laying on the table one of the *Annals*, addressed herself to Mrs. Hamilton.

“Is it not a great pity, my dear Mrs. Hamilton,” said Mrs. Figgins, “that Mr. Monckton will not marry that girl, Adeline Gordon, at once, before something worse happens to her.”

The General and Fitzallan seated themselves at the chess table.

“I do not think,” answered Mrs. Hamilton, “that Mr. Monckton shows any inclination for marriage.”

“No,” said Mrs. Figgins, “it is not to be wondered at that there are so many unmarried women in the world, when the young men can get such forward husseys to be their companions. Marriage is then never thought of; and in regard to Adeline Gordon, the whole of her conduct is disgraceful to the virtue and purity of the female character. I am given to understand that the flightiness of her conduct at your ball a few evenings ago was past all endurance.”

“It becomes me not,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “whatever may be my private opinion, to express myself disrespectfully of the conduct of any of my visitors. Miss Gordon’s high flow of spirits may sometimes carry her beyond the limits of what you may be pleased to call strict decorum, but I am not disposed

on that account to attribute any vicious disposition to her."

"Why I am informed," said Mrs. Figgins, "that it was the very reverse of decorum; first flirting with one, then flirting with another, and flouncing and bouncing about every quarter of the room; and I was further told that her behaviour towards one young gentleman, who before that night was a perfect stranger to her, was actually disgustingly forward and impudent."

Mrs. Hamilton directed a significant look towards Fitzallan, but he was at that moment too intent on the game before him to notice it, and addressing herself to Mrs. Figgins, she said, "I am not able to decide upon the truth of your statement, for I was too much occupied in my general attention to my company to take such particular notice of the conduct of any individual."

"I assure you, my dear Mrs. Hamilton," said Mrs. Figgins, "that I have it from the most indisputable authority that Miss Gordon was heard to say to a particular friend, that if Lady Amelia Fortescue had not been in the room, the stranger youth would have been dangling at her train the whole of the evening."

"Check to your king," exclaimed the General.

The attention of Fitzallan was wholly diverted from the game. He had heard a name mentioned, the sound of which penetrated to his heart, and he was anxious to catch every word that had any allusion to the object who bore it.

"Check to your king," repeated the General.

“Of what are you thinking, Fitzallan? you appear on a sudden as if you had altogether forgotten your game.”

“I—I—I was only thinking,” stammered Fitzallan, “that—that—there I interpose my bishop.” The gentlemen continued their game.

“Do you think it probable,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “that Miss Gordon could be so weak as to express herself openly in that manner, whatever her private feelings may have been?”

“There cannot be a doubt of it,” said Mrs. Figgins; “I have my information from Mrs. Jenkins, who had it from Mr. Thomson, to whom it was told by Miss Johnstone, a particular friend of Miss Gordon’s. There is not a doubt of it, I can assure you, my dear Mrs. Hamilton.”

“Check mate,” exclaimed the General; and the gentlemen rose from the table.

“Mr. Fitzallan,” said Mrs. Hamilton, “do show yourself a gallant knight, and espouse the cause of a lady fair, against whom Mrs. Figgins has brought a serious charge.”

“Why I do declare,” said Mrs. Figgins, “that the name of Fitzallan is very like that of the gentleman who fell over head and ears in love with Miss Gordon.”

“He is the very person,” said the General; “and were I of his age, I should perhaps fall into the same predicament. I pronounce Miss Gordon to have been the most beautiful girl in the room.”

“Well! this is vastly strange,” said Mrs. Figgins; “and you are really the gentleman, Mr. Fitzallan,

with whom Miss Gordon is represented to have behaved with so much impropriety."

"Pardon me, madam," said Fitzallan, "I had certainly the pleasure of being introduced to Miss Gordon; and I am able, as far as my own observation extended, to contradict in the most positive terms the imputation which has been cast upon Miss Gordon's character."

"True, sir," said Mrs. Figgins ironically, "as far as your observation extended; for one charge which Miss Gordon brings against you is, that you appeared to be so enraptured with Lady Amelia Fortescue, as to have no eyes for any other person in the room, and therefore it was very natural for her to feel herself mortified. A girl like her, who has the vanity to suppose that there is not such another beauty in the world, cannot be supposed to speak well of her rival."

Fitzallan was completely confounded, nor did his embarrassment escape the observation of Mrs. Hamilton, in whose breast some suspicions immediately rose not very favourable to the future hopes of Fitzallan. Fortunately for him, at this critical juncture Julia Manners entered the room, and having greeted Fitzallan in the most friendly manner, she informed Mrs. Hamilton that her presence was immediately requested by Lady Amelia.

"And shall we not have the pleasure of seeing Lady Amelia this evening?" asked one of the ladies.

"She is not yet quite recovered from the fatigue of the ball," said Mrs. Hamilton, "and therefore I have recommended quiet and rest to her for a little time."

Thus saying, she left the room in company with Julia.

The spirits of Fitzallan were broken for the remainder of the night. He had no expectation of seeing Lady Amelia, and he felt such a secret dislike towards his two antiquated companions, that he was not sorry when the time arrived for his departure. He took his leave, leaving behind him the impression on the minds of Mrs. Figgins and her companion, that he was a dull, stupid, prosing, senseless kind of a young fellow.

On his homeward way the mind of Fitzallan was in an unaccountable state of perplexity and anxiety. He felt that his whole nature was like an instrument out of tune ; all was discord and dissonance. He tried to bring his ideas to one settled point, and to reconcile them with each other so far, as to guide him to some decisive act, by which he could extricate himself from the net which appeared every day to entangle him more and more within its meshes. He had however so far come to the determination to send an apology to the General for not accepting his invitation, when a circumstance occurred, which at once gave his thoughts a wholly different turn, for on passing along one of the dark streets which led to his home, he was accosted by a female, whose features he could not distinguish, and who on inquiring if his name was Fitzallan, and on being answered in the affirmative, slipped into his hand a note, and then disappeared, with almost the velocity of a supernatural being. Fitzallan hastened home, and the first step which he took was to read the letter,

which contained the following lines, evidently written in a counterfeit hand.

“ Wisdom, foresight, prudence, and perseverance, will certainly lead you to the end which you have in view. Precipitation, impetuosity, and inconstancy will be the grave of your peace. At the General’s fête I will explain myself further. Be upon your guard against Lady Amelia Fortescue; she is young, but she is——This as a warning to you.

“ DOMINA.”

The commencement of this note imparted no uncommon degree of pleasure to Fitzallan, but the close of it afflicted him with very different feelings; the whole of it, however, plunged him in the greatest embarrassment. By whom was it written; and who could be the individual who could think himself entitled to warn him against Lady Amelia? Was the design evil or good? was it from a friend or foe? Its great ambiguity declared that it might proceed from either. The immediate effect of the note, however, was a determination on the part of Fitzallan, *coûte qui coûte*, to attend the General’s fête. It was too evident to him that some secret influence was at work with him; but whether for his benefit or his injury he was at a loss to decide. Some faint suspicion at times floated o’er his mind that his mother had some participation in the scenes which were now enacting around him, for her conduct appeared to him to be daily more and more enveloped in mystery; and her manifest reluctance to give him any explanation of her motions tended, in a very particular degree, to confirm him in his opinion. He

passed an almost sleepless night ; he regarded himself as the subject of a wayward destiny, and he knew not where to look for a pilot who was able to guide him through the shoals and quicksands with which he was surrounded.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh ! lay me not in the darksome vault,
Or the crowded churchyard's soil,
Midst the thronging gravestone's record brief,
Of the stern destroyer's spoil;
Nor bury me in the cloister'd aisle,
With prayer, or booth, or bell;
For all unheard o'er my silent tomb;
Would the pealing anthems swell.
But bear me far—Oh ! far away,
To that remember'd spot;
There only could my spirit find
The sleep that waketh not.

THE storm raged loudly, and o'er the dying embers of his fire sat, deeply immersed in the madness of his grief, the veteran Major Arnfeld. “And thus,” said he, “with one blow has the once fair fabric of my earthly happiness been levelled with the ground. What have I now to do with the world? I sit as one on a rock with ocean's weltering waves around me; the last remnant of humanity, with naught to love, or that can love me. I look around me, and she on whom I doated, who was entwined with every fibre of my heart, what is she now?—dishonoured, disgraced; lost, lost for ever. My fair and untarnished name is now spoken with contempt; infamy follows me whithersoever I go; and shall I live and endure

this weight of suffering? shall he too live and witness my disgrace? shall he see my once beloved child hooted at, pointed out, as if she were one that was an outcast from the herd of human beings, too base and guilty for them to hold communion with; and does he think, that because some noble blood flows in his veins, that he shall escape my vengeance? Does he think that his nobility invested him with the privilege of effecting the ruin of as sweet a flower as ever bloomed beneath a parent's care? What is my life to me if stained with dishonour? But will his blood wash out that stain? will it restore my once beloved Maria to her former state of virgin innocence? But the deed shall be done though I expiate my crime on the scaffold; I shall expire with the gratifying thought of there being one villain less in the world. Yes, it shall be done, though frenzy fire my brain, and I stand a scathed wretch for heaven's lightnings to play upon; a houseless wanderer; the sole tenant of a desert; he shall die." Turning his head towards the door, he exclaimed "Maria!"

A female entered, faint, pale, and tottering, but lovely in her make and form. On her countenance sat the traces of a deep, overwhelming sorrow, and her bloodshot eyes betrayed how incessantly her tears had flowed.

"Maria!" repeated the afflicted parent.

"Father, what is your pleasure with me?" asked Maria.

"What is the hour of the night, girl?" asked Arnfeld.

"It is past midnight, father," answered Maria.

“ There was a time,” said Arnfeld, “ when at that hour I could lay my head on my pillow, and sleep the night away in dreams of youthful happiness—but that time is gone for ever. Now, if I close my eyes, some damned vision starts before me ; I see the murderer of my child grinning his smile of triumph ; maddened with rage I tear my hoary locks, while on my aching brow sit big drops of mental anguish. There was a time when I could say my prayers at night, and think that they were heard ; but now I cannot pray ; I am forsaken by heaven.”

“ Not so, my father,” said Maria ; “ the God who made his erring child will not shut his heaven against her ; then, as my earthly father, shut not your heart against me. These tears declare how deep is my repentance, how acute my sufferings. Give me a grave, father, for I long for rest.”

“ And thou shalt have it, child,” said Arnfeld ; “ one shall hold us both : as in life I loved thee, in death we will not be separated. But ere that be done another must be sent before us, and we will hasten after him as his accusers. Take these keys, in my private chest you will find my pistols ; bring them to me.”

“ And what, my father, would you do with them ?” asked Maria.

“ It will but require an infant’s strength,” said Arnfeld, “ and your accursed seducer shall lie weltering in his blood at my feet ; and then, Maria—come nearer, my child—will it not be sweet ? another motion of my finger will lay your father at his side. The accused and the accuser will then appear at the

same time before their Judge in heaven ; he will hear the good—he will hear the bad ; and, as a father, I shall be forgiven.”

Maria stood before her father, almost inanimate as a statue ; she ventured not to stretch forth her hands to the keys, and she cast a look on her parent, which would have disarmed a fiend. Absorbed in the intensity of their feelings, neither spoke ; but in their silence was an expression, at once thrilling, solemn, and depressing.

“ What didst thou say, child ? ” said her father at last ; “ wert thou praying ? Seest thou that faint and flickering flame ? there—there—’tis gone. Such is life ; ’tis but a moment, and all is over. But then what follows ? a darkness I cannot penetrate, and of the end of which I have no knowledge ; but no sun shall shine upon him again. Girl, take the keys ; it is thy father’s last command on earth, and henceforth thou art free. Thou knowest his haunts, girl ; come, thou shalt lead me to them.”

“ It is past midnight, father ; you would not leave your home at such an hour.”

“ It is better for that, girl,” said Arnfeld ; “ the hour and the deed suit each other ; and as to a home, I had one once, and was happy in it ; now some desert should be my abode, tracked by no human footsteps ; the most savage of its beasts should be my associates, for I have no longer fellowship with man.”

“ Come, father, torture me no longer,” said Maria. “ Will you not to bed ? ”

“ Bed ! didst thou say, girl ? what have I to do

with sleep, excepting that from which there is no awakening? The sleep of death to one like me must be a sweet one. But tell me what the villain said; will he marry thee?"

"My William is good, father; he will not desert me."

At this moment a low and cautious knock was heard at the outer door. An involuntary shudder came over Maria, the blood forsook her cheeks, her whole frame tottered; she looked wildly around her, as if she expected some denizen of hell to burst upon her.

"Hark!" exclaimed Arnfeld, whilst a smile of malice, such as a devil would put on when a human virtue is murdered, came over his countenance. "See who knocks, girl: if it be your William, who is so good to you, by all means ask him in. A glass of wine would cheer me much, and I should enjoy it the more in the presence of so good a friend: ask him in, ask him in. Go to the larder, girl; deck your table out with your choicest viands to welcome so good a friend. Seest thou not how calm I am on a sudden; I can now smile and laugh—ha! ha! ha! but perhaps he would like the invitation better from myself. He shall have it;" and rising from his chair, he rushed, with a maniac's fury, towards the door.

"Father! father!" exclaimed Maria, clasping his knees in frantic grief, "it is not—it is not William. Oh! by the love you once bore me, compose yourself: a few more hours and you shall not have your daughter to upbraid; the world is all before me; and heaven, although I may have sinned, will give to me a resting place."

“ And I will go with thee, girl ; and I will show to that world the spectacle of what a child can reduce a parent to ; but first, give me the keys ;” and, snatching them from her hand, he rushed up stairs to his bed-chamber.

“ No !” exclaimed Maria, “ he once loved me, and he shall not fall a victim to my father’s rage.” She flew to the door ; she opened it, but no one was there. “ Thank heaven, he is safe ;” and she returned to the sitting-room.

The suspense which now racked the mind of Maria was too dreadful to be borne ; she expected her father to burst in upon her every moment with the deadly weapons in his hands, and she knew not but that, in the wildness of his rage, both might be the victims of it. On a sudden a noise struck her ears, as if something heavy had fallen on the ground. A dreadful thought rushed upon her mind ; her father had perhaps committed suicide. Scarcely conscious of her actions, she rushed into the bed-chamber of her father ; there she found him extended on the floor ; in his hands he held the pistols, and the certainty now flashed upon her that her father was no more. With a thrilling scream she threw herself on the body ; she felt his heart, it still beat ; she felt his hands, they were still warm. “ He lives ! he lives !” she exclaimed. A deep groan came from the agonized frame of Arnfeld ; it was the struggle of life over death. A convulsive motion told the return of animation.

“ Father ! father ! Oh, speak to me,” cried Maria ; it is your once beloved child who implores you.”

“It is past,” lowly muttered Arnfeld; “and the scenes of this world are now closing upon me for ever. He is gone with my curses on his head; and I, what am I? a murderer!”

“Not so,” said Maria; “it is all the work of your distempered fancy: you are no murderer.”

“But if it be not yet, it must be so,” said Arnfeld. “Go, go to thy rest, child; I will try and pray.”

The clock from the neighbouring church struck two; the sound seemed to startle Arnfeld.

“I have heard that sound,” he said, “in happier days; now it comes upon me as a solemn summons to another world, and one that must be obeyed. Then be it so; I’ll be prepared for it: now to rest. Good night, girl.”

“You were wont to kiss me, father, when you bade me good night.”

“It may be the last,” said Arnfeld. “There; good night.”

Suffused in tears, Maria left the room. On reaching her bedchamber she threw herself on her knees. Though in the eyes of man she was guilty, she dared to look to heaven; and yet perhaps a more guiltless soul never offered up its orisons to the throne of mercy. The child of nature appealed to the God of nature, and for its human transgressions will it be pardoned. And yet Maria was good; a purer spirit never emanated from the hands of its Maker; a nobler, a more affectionate heart never vivified a human bosom; but she now appeared in the world like a lovely rose-bud torn by some spoiler’s hand

from its parent stem; defoliated, bruised, and broken. The finger of the untainted, untempted prude might point at her with scorn; she might shun her as a stricken deer, too sorely wounded to mix with the common herd of human beings, and in the fulness of her boasted chastity she might exclaim, "I thank my God I am not as thou art." But bear up awhile thou fallen one; that God who gave thee a heart to feel, who implanted in thy nature a passion, and gave thee not at the same time the power to withstand it, will judge thee as he made thee; and where heaven is thy judge, how empty and insignificant is the judgment of man.

One of the first steps which Monckton took on the morning following the unexpected interview with his father, was to pay a visit to his beloved Adeline. She was the depositary of all his secrets; and although he entertained no suspicion of it, yet she knew how to turn many of those secrets to her own advantage, at the same time that she succeeded in convincing him that it was his interest only that she had in view. He now related to her the whole tenour of his interview with his father; but, for particular reasons he studiously avoided imparting to her the warning which his father had given to him on her own account. When, however, Monckton mentioned the injunction of his parent not to attend the General's fête, a sudden gloom came over the countenance of Adeline, which did not escape the observation of Monckton; who, on inquiring the cause, was informed that it arose solely from the disappointment which she was likely to undergo in being deprived of

his society at the fête. This information could not be but highly gratifying to the feelings of Monckton. "Where there is such concern manifested at my absence," said he to himself, "there must be affection;" and perhaps, at that moment, there was no enterprise however hardy, or even criminal, which he would not have undertaken to establish himself still firmer in the good graces of his inamorata; at all events, it had this immediate effect, that it strengthened him in his determination to act in direct opposition to his father's commands. "And then," said Monckton, "to be told that I am not to molest that formal, pedantic fellow, that Hector Fitzallan; I wonder what he can be to my father, that he should take such an interest about him?"

This was the very point to which Adeline wished to lead her admirer; for although she knew well that one of the most efficient methods of increasing the ardour of an affection is to throw out some dark and mysterious insinuations of the existence of a rival, yet for some reasons, which she did not think it proper to make manifest, it was not her wish to appear at this moment as if the subject originated with her.

"Fitzallan appears to me," said Adeline, "to be far too presumptuous for his condition in life; his attentions to me I could overlook, as my want of title might lead him to suppose that I was his equal; but his presumption in forcing his society upon Lady Amelia Fortescue rendered him really ridiculous."

"And had the inflated fellow," asked Monckton, "the impertinence to behave towards you as if you were on an equality with him?"

“ I at first,” said Adeline, “ refused his invitation to dance with him, but he was so importunate, and Julia Manners solicited so strongly in his behalf, that I ultimately consented to dance with him.”

“ But I hope you will never do it again,” said Monckton.

“ I cannot depart from the accustomed etiquette of society,” said Adeline ; “ and consistently with that etiquette I cannot refuse the invitation of any gentleman in a private ball-room to dance with him ; but that does not imply that I am bound to acknowledge him elsewhere.”

“ You have long been acquainted,” said Monckton, “ with the ardent love which I bear for you, and I hope you will never give me reason to doubt the sincerity of that affection, which you have so often professed for me, and which I consider as the greatest happiness of my life. No stronger proof of my own love can I give you at present, than to declare that if it be your wish that I should attend the fête of the General, I will do it in despite of all the commands of my parent.”

“ It is a masked fête, is it not ?” asked Adeline.

“ Undoubtedly,” said Monckton.

“ Then how is your father to know that you are in the room ?” asked the artful girl.

“ But at supper we shall be obliged to unmask,” said Monckton.

“ Then absent yourself from the supper-table,” said Adeline.

“ But that,” said Monckton, would deprive me of

the greatest enjoyment of the evening, to be your companion at the supper-table."

"Let not that disturb you," said Adeline; "but, *à propos*, as you are personally acquainted with Mr. Fitzallan, suppose we were to form a plot to humble him a little. You can perhaps undertake to obtain from him the exact character in which he intends to appear, and I would then recommend that you should appear precisely in the same; leave the remainder to me, and I think we shall soon be free of his company; then one part of your father's injunction will be a nullity."

Monckton saw not through the deep laid plan of Adeline, and he engaged that very day to obtain from Fitzallan all the information which she required, and for which she had been for some time perplexing her brain to devise some means of obtaining.

The conversation for a time took a desultory turn, touching on topics of mere local interest; but there was one subject nearest the heart of Monckton, which he had often sought for an opportunity to declare, but he was fearful to disclose too much the native turpitude of his heart, or to excite any suspicion in the breast of Adeline respecting the honour and uprightness of his intentions towards her. Monckton at last ventured to speak of his love, and Adeline appeared to listen to him with all that delight which such protestations in general excite.

"I hope," said Monckton, "that the day is not far distant when all restraint will be banished between us, and that I shall enjoy the envied title of the husband of Adeline Gordon."

“ You know well,” said Adeline, “ that I am not at present the mistress of my own hand ; and further you must consider, that you are the heir to a title, the only surviving branch of one of the most noble families of the country ; nor am I by any means ignorant of the high aristocratical notions which your father entertains on matters of family and rank ; consequently I must know, that he would consider a matrimonial union with me as an indelible disgrace upon his name.”

“ Impossible !” said Monckton. “ Why should the foolish prejudices of my father stand in the way of our mutual happiness ; but supposing even that he interposed the full weight of his parental authority, is there no way of outwardly appearing to comply with his prejudices, and secretly consummating our happiness ?”

“ I do not perfectly understand you,” said Adeline.

“ Peculiar interests may prompt us for a time,” said Monckton, “ to bend to parental authority, but whilst we are waiting for an event which is to emancipate us from its shackles, the brilliant days of our youth fade away ; the fire which now sparkles in our eyes becomes faint ; the moments which ought to be passed in mutual bliss are foolishly sacrificed to the cold and heartless forms which human beings have invented to stifle the warm and glowing affections of the heart ; and we find, when it is too late, that we have been made the dupes of a blind and passive obedience to the mere caprices and prejudices of others, instead of boldly and resolutely following

the path which our nature and our affections have pointed out to us."

"You are most provokingly enigmatical to-day," said Adeline; "but I think I can penetrate the drift of your remarks; you would have me overleap at once the boundary which prudence and decorum have established for the conduct of every female, and thereby set at naught the opinion of the whole world for the sole enjoyment of your society."

"And if the enjoyment of that society," said Monckton, "were secretly sanctioned by the regular forms and ordinances of our religion—what then?"

There was something in the look of Adeline at this moment which completely divested Monckton of all self-possession. He stood before her like a culprit, conscious of his offence, but knowing not what reparation to make for it. There was a chilling severity in the look of Adeline, which told him that he had carried his presumption too far; or, at least, that he had been too premature in avowing his designs. On the other hand, a struggle of no common kind was working in the breast of Adeline; her pride was wounded to suppose that he had formed such a degrading estimate of her character, as to imagine that she would fall so readily at the first attack into the plans which he proposed. Still, however, it fell not within her policy at present to come to an open rupture with him; the meanness and obsequiousness of his character were too essential to her in the prosecution of her plans, and she required his services particularly at this moment to establish her conquest over a heart which she estimated at a far greater price

than his own. In reality, he was but a puppet in her hands, and all her boasted love and affection for him had just as much substance in them as the foam at the top of the billow.

Monckton stood for some moments abashed, and seemed to dread the next word that might issue from her lips; but he revived when he saw a smile come over her countenance, and she said, in a most affable tone, "Let us, my dear Monckton, put an end at present to this discourse. I do not wish that you should be lowered in my good opinion; and I am certain, that were we to prolong this subject, we should part under very different circumstances than we met."

"Heaven forbid!" said Monckton; "if I have expressed myself in any way hurtful to your feelings; attribute it to the ardour of my love, and not to any desire to inflict the slightest wound upon your heart."

"*A propos*," said Adeline, who was anxious to divert the conversation into a different channel, "I am heartily glad that you have called on me this morning; we have made a party to attend the theatre this evening. If you will join us I will retain a seat for you, and you will then perhaps be able to impart to me the information which is necessary for the accomplishment of our plans."

"I will attend you most joyfully," said Monckton; "and I will now take my leave in search of Fitzallan; I should not be surprised if I had to look for him by the side of some purling stream, or in the heart of some gloomy wood. Suppose we advise

him to turn Catholic, and then he can become a Trappist; the monk's cowl would become him well. Adieu; at night I will be with you."

"Fool that man is," said Adeline, as Monckton closed the door, "what is he but a pigmy with all his boasted power: a single look can make a child of him; a smile can make him a slave; a kiss, if it be only seasoned with hope, can make a hero of him; and if love be added to hope, he becomes a god. What is there which I could not accomplish with such a lover as Monckton as my instrument—a creature that I would not take to my arms had he a crown to lay at my feet. No; the man who rests within them, who pillows his head on my bosom, must be of a different stamp; nature must have taken some trouble in his formation; he must not be one of those common every day things which she sends forth by hundreds into the world to fill up a given space, and having toiled and fretted for their allotted time, are huddled into a grave, and are forgotten. I would have the man, who, though standing as the last remnant of his race amidst the crash of worlds, would fearlessly wait the last effort of the exterminating spirit, and sink amongst the crumbling ruins, proudly erect and proudly dying. But where is such a man to be found? the things that flutter around me, and call themselves men, have my scorn; and what if I should find this Fitzallan but an aggregate of the same weaknesses, the same inconsistencies, the same degenerate nature? Then shall it be my pride, my joy, henceforth to make mankind my plaything. I will be an *ignis fatuus*, dancing with my light

before them, to lure them to the grave of their happiness."

Adeline was disturbed in these reflections by the entrance of a servant, announcing that a stranger was in waiting who was desirous of having a few minutes' conversation with her.

"With me!" exclaimed Adeline, "Who is he? what is he?"

"He is a perfect stranger to me, ma'am," said the servant; "and on inquiring his name, he begged to be excused from declaring it."

"Not give his name!" exclaimed Adeline. "Is either my father or mother at home?"

"Neither," replied the servant; "they walked out about an hour ago."

"It is most strange," said Adeline, musing for a moment; "what business can a stranger have with me? Did you inquire the motive of his call?"

"I did," answered the servant; "but he gave me a sharp rebuff, for he told me that his business was with Miss Gordon, and not with me."

"It may be Fitzallan," said Adeline to herself; and without reflecting for a moment on the great improbability of that suspicion being correct, she ordered the servant to introduce the stranger. She was, however, completely disappointed in her expectations, when the door opened, and a person entered, far advanced in years, of a noble and commanding mien, but on whose countenance sat the deep traces of an overwhelming sorrow. It was Major Arnfeld.

"Have I the pleasure," he said, on entering, "of addressing myself to Miss Gordon?"

“ I am that person,” said Adeline.

“ You will, I hope,” said Arnfeld, “ pardon this rudeness on my part, in thus presuming to intrude myself upon your society, but”—he hesitated—“ I have a tale to tell. You see before you a broken-hearted parent; a creature bowed to the earth with misery; no tie has he to bind him to the world; he had but one, and that one is snapped for ever.”

“ You appear to suffer much, sir,” said Adeline; “ but will you favour me with your name, or inform me in what manner I can contribute to your relief.”

“ In regard to my name,” said Arnfeld, “ it is of little consequence; it was once pronounced with honour and respect; now I care not how soon ’tis blotted from the memory of man; and as to relief, I know of only one place where it is to be found, and that is my grave; it is now digging for me—but I am looking for a companion to join me in it; you can perhaps direct me to him: pardon me if I speak incoherently. There is a fire consuming my brain, unquenchable, unextinguishable; the world seems to me as if the Almighty had left go his hold of it, roaming at large unchecked, unheeded for, and made the chosen spot for damned fiends to sport in. But I’ll be calm; I can yet fashion my lips to pronounce his name. Is not—is not a man of the name of Monckton in this house?”

“ Monckton!” exclaimed Adeline, overcome with surprise; “ he is not here at present; he departed about half an hour ago.”

"Again I have missed him," said Arnfeld, muttering to himself; "some hidden power protects him from my vengeance." Addressing himself to Adeline, he said, "You can perhaps direct me in the route which he has taken."

"I know it not," said Adeline; "but have you any important business to settle with Mr. Monckton?"

"Yes, ma'am; yes, ma'am," exclaimed Arnfeld, assuming a degree of coolness, whilst his whole frame shook with agitation; "I have a little account to settle with him; one moment, one moment, and the business will be all arranged, I am certain, to my entire satisfaction."

"You appear to be excessively agitated, sir," said Adeline; "do compose yourself, I pray; and if I can be your intercessor with Mr Monckton to arrange any little difference between you, you may command my services."

"Agitated, Miss Gordon," said Arnfeld, assuming a ghastly smile; "oh, no; you are much, very much mistaken. I am quite cool, quite collected; the very thought of your suspicion excites my laughter—ha! ha! ha!"

Adeline shook with fear; there was an hysterical wildness in the laugh, such as the maniac would assume when some faint glimmer of former scenes comes across his memory. She was retreating towards the door, when Arnfeld said,

"Why shrink from me? In the whole round of animated life I know but one object that I would injure. And has he not injured me? deeply, deeply; blame me not for these tears; but they are welcome.

They tell me I am still a human being, although I now stand here as a solitary, blighted tree, absolved from every tie which binds man to man, or which can make me wish for life. I had once a daughter—”

“Once !” exclaimed Adeline ; “and is she then no more ?”

“Would that I could say so,” said Arnfeld ; “she was once as pure as snow new fallen, and as such I wished her to descend into her grave ; but the villain came, serpent-like, he instilled his poison into her ear ; around her affectionate, unsuspecting heart he wound his treacherous coils ; in the dark midnight hour he spoke his baseless promises ; on her yet unpolluted lips he stamped his kiss of lust ; he saw the unequal struggle ; another and another ; still the pearl was in the shell. She called upon heaven, upon her guardian spirit ; in the last writhings of her conquered virtue she called upon me, her father, but her voice was stifled ; the kiss of the villain hushed it, and made it inaudible ; it was but the faint last whisper of her expiring innocence : the decisive moment came, the lamb bled by the side of its murderer. Hell saw the deed and laughed ; I hear it now, as the voices of all its fiends burst forth in horrid dissonance, rejoicing that another virtue was dead upon the earth ; and I, I, still live to tell it. But the hour of retribution is not far off ; come when it may, I am prepared for it.”

Adeline stood aghast ; her soul was harrowed with feelings yet unknown to her, but still she felt for herself. She saw the abyss, on the brink of which she

herself was standing ; the whole meaning of Monckton's enigmatical language was now expounded to her ; all the fiery passions of her nature were roused, and stood revealed on her countenance. Arnfeld construed this intensity of feeling into a just and boundless indignation at the act of the criminal. He took the hand of Adeline, it trembled within his convulsive grasp ; and, in a slow and solemn tone, he said, " The scenes of this world are now closing fast upon me ; I have run my course, and the sun of my life sets in the gloom of a tempest ; but, like that sun which now shines upon us, it will rise again in renovated glory ; for the bliss of heaven will not be denied to a broken-hearted father, even though he appear at the throne of it before his appointed time, with the murdered murderer of his child. Now, farewell ! Go, for you are yet young, and mingle with the world ; we may never meet again ; but when, in one of those never-to-be-forgotten hours of your life, around your neck are thrown the arms of him you love ; when in the glowing kisses which he imprints on your lips, you feel the ardour of his passion ; when in himself you see all that the world holds dear to you, and in the wild palpitations of your own heart you feel the weakness of your nature, then, then think of your father ; think of me, think of my child, —farewell."

Arnfeld vanished from her sight, and Adeline stood with her eyes fixed on the door by which he had departed. Her ideas appeared to be all in confusion ; she thought she still saw the venerable figure of Arnfeld standing before her ; his last and solemn

farewell still vibrated in her ears, and sounded as a serious warning spoken by an invisible spirit. Had she ever in reality loved Monckton, what must have been now her feelings? but how to deport herself towards him in future? that appeared to her the most difficult part of her task. It was the intrinsic baseness of his character, and his extreme servility which made him so useful to her; and to dispense with him at present was impossible. She knew him to be her most abject slave, but at the same time she had now ascertained that his boasted love for her had perhaps no other aim than that which had guided him in his pretended attachment to his now hapless victim. Hatred therefore of the most deadly nature towards him sprang up in her heart, but a sudden thought flashed upon her. "He was my slave before, now he is doubly so. I have him so now in my power that he shall tremble at my very look, but for a time I will dissemble; he shall not perceive any immediate change in my conduct, but if he ever hesitate to execute any of my plans, then will I use such ambiguous words as to lead him to suspect that I am privy to his infamy; and when I have no further use for him—why then let the father of his victim wreak the fulness of his vengeance upon him."

A carriage at this moment drove up to the hall door. Adeline was by no means in a proper mood to receive company, especially of that sort who, for about three hours P.M. are rolled in their carriages from street to street, proud of hearing their party-coloured, jolter-headed coxcomb practising himself on his susquepedalian knocks at the doors of their

acquaintance, and who have in reality no other motive for their visit than to drive away the fiend Ennui, or to display some new fashionable gewgaw, or perchance, if the tenant of the carriage be a zealous member of the Bible or Missionary Societies, to confer on the great success which has attended the exertions of those societies ; on the consequent decrease of crime, and perhaps to relate the glad tidings that no doubt now whatever existed of the ultimate conversion of the empire of China to the Christian faith, as, by the latest accounts from that quarter, three converts had been made, although two of them had since shown some symptoms of backsliding.* The visitor was, however, no other person than Mrs. Hamilton, who had paid her a morning call for the

* It is far from the intention of the author of this work to cast any sneer upon the labours of the Missionary Societies so long as they confine themselves to those quarters from which emanates the slightest hope of success ; but to expect that the Chinese nation, or any part thereof, will ever be converted to the Christian religion is an idea which can only be entertained in the mind of an idiot. A *general* religion is inconsistent with the physical nature of the globe ; it cannot be made to exist, even supposing that the natives were disposed to accept of it. If the Mahometans were to send out their missionaries to Lapland, and to preach the keeping of the rigorous fast of the Ramadan, which enjoins that no food shall be tasted between the rising and setting of the sun—could a Laplander ever become a Mahometan ? His Ramadan would last six months, and Islamism could not therefore form the religion of the country. We could point to countries, where, from similar causes, Christianity never can become the religion of the people ; a solitary convert may be made, and the missionary may write home, that *his sphere of usefulness* is extending. But one swallow does not make a summer, and one convert does not prove the conversion of a whole people.

purpose of imparting to Adeline some private intelligence in which she was personally interested ; but as the conference was carried on with closed doors, and in a low and cautious whisper, it must be left to futurity to disclose the import of it.

CHAPTER X.

I'm sure he could not love her more
In the shrine of her young heart;
At her fond kiss, no sweeter gush
Of ecstasy would start.
But the beautiful are ever loved,
And cherished on the earth;
Affection twines her fairest wreaths
To crown them at their birth.

It may have been owing to design, it may have been owing to chance, or it may have been owing to any other power which the liberality or ingenuity of the reader may fix upon, that the following circumstance took place. By ourselves the question itself is insoluble, although we are by no means ignorant that premeditation has generally more to do in the affairs of lovers than they are sometimes willing to admit, and that they are prone to attribute many circumstances to chance, which they have been actually employing the whole force of their ingenuity to bring to pass, but at which they would feel a kind of *mauvaise honte* at being even suspected of conniving. We, however, consider it to be an act highly meritorious in us, when we find ourselves at a loss to account for any particular circumstance to hold our tongues about it altogether, and thereby exonerate

ourselves from the charge of folly or stupidity in attempting to decide upon a point, of which we cannot be otherwise than ignorant of its ruling cause. Consistently with that principle, we will not pretend to account for that strange combination of circumstances, which brought Hector Fitzallan and Amelia Fortescue into the immediate presence of each other when it was the least expected by either of them; we will attribute it all to chance; but blessed for ever be that chance, which, in the wormwood cup of life, will at times mix so sweet an ingredient.

The weather was uncommonly fine, and Fitzallan had left the noise and bustle of the town for the more sober and rational scenes of the country. His general pursuits had lost their interest; his nature appeared to be metamorphosed, but into what, or by what, he could not tell. The world exhibited itself to him in a wholly different light than formerly; for feelings had been excited in his heart which made him regard certain objects with accumulated interest, and others with entire neglect; and this all in direct opposition to his previous prejudices. The sphere of his action appeared to him enlarged, but in all his plans, in all the schemes which he framed for his future establishment in life, his heart pointed to only one object, and yet it was too manifest to him that that object never could be his; that she was in fact too far above him, and that it was "in her bright radiance and collateral light" that he must be comforted, not in her sphere. Ere perhaps a few months had passed over his head he would scarcely dare to mention her name; and were he to do it, it must be in the silent

hours of his sorrows, when it would escape from him in a whisper not to be heard by mortal ear, and too faint for any echo to catch to tell it to the world. When therefore he viewed his future prospects through this medium every thing appeared dark and gloomy to him, nor did the mysterious circumstances which appeared to accompany all the actions of his mother, and the uncertainty respecting the fate of his father, tend by any means to restore his mind to its wonted tranquillity. In regard to the conduct of his mother, it had lately become still more unaccountable than at his first entrance into life ; and so peremptory were her injunctions on him not to attempt to penetrate the veil in which she was enveloped, that the situation in which they now stood to each other was little short of a positive estrangement from each other's society. This circumstance, added to the unfortunate attachment which he had imbibed for Lady Amelia Fortescue, alienated his mind from his customary pursuits, and drove him into solitude to brood in secret over his wayward destiny. With every morning some fresh resolution was formed, and every evening saw it broken. He was determined to emancipate himself from the thralldom which weighed so heavily upon him, but it was a task of no trifling difficulty to discover the means by which that end could be accomplished. He knew of no physician who in such matters could administer a remedy to him, and he was by no means disposed to follow the advice of the stagyrite, who, in cases of such a desperate nature, strongly recommends the immediate use of a halter. One resolution, however, he was de-

terminated to abide by, and that was to shun, as much as possible, the society of Lady Amelia ; and neither by word nor deed to give her to understand how deep was the impression which her beauty had made upon him. It is well for the coroner, it is well for themselves, that the resolutions of lovers are very like the top of a syllabub—all froth and no substance ; and the manner in which Hector Fitzallan adhered to the notable resolution which he had taken will only add another to the many hundreds of proofs that are already in existence, that a lover in his actions is a jumble of eccentricity and inconsistency, half a fool and half a madman.

Hector had not long bent his course to one of his sequestered haunts, when the door of General Hamilton's house was seen to open, and from it tripped two light and airy figures, who, guided perhaps by some benignant genius, appeared to bend their steps in the same direction which Fitzallan had taken. That this could be the mere effect of chance, or that they had not by some means, not easily to be accounted for, obtained a knowledge of the route which he had taken, will not be credited by many ; and no doubt can be entertained that the important question will be raised by some rigid, prudish stickler for the propriety of female conduct, how far it was commendable in the said females, in just adopting the very road which could not fail to bring them into collision with a young man, on whose account one of them in particular had received the most positive prohibition not to commit herself by any act of intimacy or familiarity, and to conduct herself towards him in every

respect with the most studied formality. Prudence, no doubt dictated these precautionary measures ; but love and prudence have seldom as little connexion with each other, as humility with a bishop, or liberality of mind with a Stylite.

Hector was sitting on the trunk of a tree, tracing with a stick some hieroglyphical figures in the sand, which perhaps when put together might have formed the word Amelia ; and he was just then thinking how like those figures was woman's love, which with the first gust of wind which swept over them might be effaced for ever, when the sound of voices behind him suddenly aroused him from his reverie. He looked around, and to his inexpressible surprise, Lady Amelia, with her friend Julia, presented themselves to his view. We know not how others may appreciate the feelings which now swayed the breast of Fitzallan, but that they partook more of heaven than of earth can be told by all, who have been ever so blessed as to feel their influence. Fitzallan rose, and the most marked embarrassment was conspicuous in all his motions, nor was the confusion which Lady Amelia displayed less striking. Perhaps some busy officious monitor within was whispering to her that she was overstepping the bounds of propriety, and that she was actually exposing her weakness in a quarter, where the least of all she would wish it to be known. It is generally affirmed, that in certain cases a third person is the greatest of all imaginable nuisances, but in the present instance it would be difficult to say in what manner either Fitzallan or Lady Amelia would have recovered from their confusion, if



"It is really a most delightful spot," said Julia, seating herself on the trunk of the tree, "for a contemplative philosopher, he can here study the stars and the moon; and look, addressing herself to holy spirits, he can learn how to write AMELIA on the sand."

it had not been for the intervention of a third person, who, after having very sagaciously declared it to be a most unaccountable event, that they should thus *by chance* fall into each other's company, began to rally Fitzallan on his secluded habits, and recommended him to build a hermitage, where he could associate with tom-tits and jackdaws, and enjoy the charms of solitude without the fear of disturbance. "It is really a most delightful spot," said Julia, seating herself on the trunk of the tree, "for a contemplative philosopher; he can here study the stars and the moon; and look," addressing herself to Lady Amelia, "he can learn how to write A M E L I A on the sand."

There was something provokingly vexatious to Fitzallan in Julia making this untimely discovery. He bit his lip with chagrin, and effaced the letters with his foot. He felt ashamed of the disclosure, but why he should feel so, he could not tell; but it is singular that the noblest passion of the human heart, which builds its resolves on the verge of impossibility, and which to gain its end would count the sands of the ocean, is nevertheless generally attended with the greatest weakness. In what manner the discovery affected the feelings of Lady Amelia cannot be positively stated; it may indeed be guessed at, and we will venture to predict, that ninety-nine out of a hundred will not be mistaken in their estimate. It is however surprising, how more powerfully a trifle sometimes speaks to the female heart, than all the forms which the most studied language can invent; and it must be remembered, that nothing is more quick in seizing hold of those trifles than a youthful

heart, which is glowing for the first time with the inspirations of a life-warm passion.

“Come, Mr. Fitzallan,” continued Julia, “seat yourself by my side, and you shall tell me how far you had succeeded in discovering the longitude when we so suddenly interrupted you.”

Fitzallan did seat himself according to the invitation of Julia, but Lady Amelia was still standing. Politeness whispered Fitzallan to offer her a seat, but Julia, either by chance or design had seated herself so close to the end of the tree, that not the least space was left at her side for a seat for Lady Amelia, and therefore, if Lady Amelia did seat herself at all, it could be in no other position than at the immediate side of Fitzallan. His diffidence, however, did not allow him to offer her that seat; but, to his inexpressible delight, she waited not to be asked, but, with the utmost *naïveté*, seated herself by his side; and it was a moment which Fitzallan loved to dwell upon when, in the darkness of his age, he recalled to his memory those periods of his life in which he had been most happy. It was a situation as novel as it was unexpected by him; but still it would have puzzled the profoundest metaphysician of the age to have given a distinct analysis of the feelings which now appeared to overpower him by their intensity. He felt as if there were nothing more in the world that he could wish for, and yet the next moment his inflamed imagination carried him away to scenes, at first dazzling bright with human happiness, but immediately afterwards enveloped in the dark shrouds of misery and desolation. The thought that Amelia

did love him, raised him to the pinnacle of bliss ; the thought that in a few weeks more perhaps she *dare* not love him, reduced him to despair. The lovely being that was now sitting by his side, the beatings of whose heart were almost audible to him, (whose hand, which by some unaccountable means, had crept into his, and which he was then pressing with all the ardour of a first love,) was destined for the arms of another ; at the very thought of it, a thrilling coldness ran through all his veins, and he felt as if he were in the presence of some holy unpolled spirit, with whom even to mingle his breath were profanation. But one of the most powerful auxiliaries of love is hope, and hope will sometimes throw its flattering light over the gloom of a lover's soul, and so irradiate his future prospects, that every thing which a moment before was dark and gloomy, assumes on a sudden the most brilliant and inspiring hues ; the clouds of despair are dispelled, and a heaven of bliss and transport opens to his view.

It would be a task of no trifling difficulty to determine the exact subject of conversation which engaged the attention of the happy trio ; for it may with truth be affirmed, that if it had not been for Julia, it almost amounts to a certainty, that in regard to the other two there would have been scarcely any conversation at all. When the heart is full the tongue is seldom eloquent ; and in the present instance speech was of little avail, for in every glance which shot from the eyes of two of them, there spoke a language far more strong and expressive than ever could be uttered by human tongue. Not but that there was one topic which

Hector would have gladly touched upon, and from which perhaps he was only restrained by the presence of a third person, or by that kind of bashfulness which is ever the attendant of a genuine affection. For ourselves we believe and know, that there is nothing more laconic than the style of love ; with two personal pronouns and a verb two lovers can entertain each other during the whole of the day, but whether it would be equally entertaining to a third person is a question very easily solved. There was however one point which Julia wished particularly to discuss, and that was the most extraordinary coincidence of this meeting, as far as regarded it having been the consequence of premeditation or design ; for that was a point which she wished particularly to impress on the mind of Hector, as it was not proper that he should entertain for a moment the very erroneous idea, that Lady Amelia or herself had by any means ascertained the exact route which he had taken ; and therefore he could not but admit that their meeting was merely the consequence of that strange combination of circumstances, which does sometimes happen in this world to the great astonishment and wonder of those, who are principally interested in them, and who at the same time, if they would be candid, would be able to tell that the whole business, instead of being accidental, has been brought about by their own management and connivance. Nevertheless, it is sometimes as difficult to trace the workings of the female heart as it is to unravel the clue of Ariadne ; and in both cases, when the task is accomplished, we arrive at —nothing. Had Julia been guided by true policy,

or by even a portion of that cunning, which generally characterises the female mind in matters of this kind, she would perhaps have forborne to say any thing about this meeting, and have left Fitzallan to draw whatever conclusions his penetration or his vanity might have suggested; but to look for sound judgment or discretion in a giddy, flighty girl of nineteen were tantamount to expect the solution of the knotty question, of how many angels can dance on the point of a needle, from a cannibal of New Zealand. That she failed in the effect she intended to produce is most certain; for although Fitzallan had not as yet mingled much in the world, nor had been thrown into those situations where a strong diversity of character presents itself, yet he was not wholly ignorant of the little devices and stratagems by which certain ladies are in the habit of deceiving those in whom they feel a peculiar interest; and judging of Julia by that standard, he saw in her attempts to convince him that their meeting was accidental, some very strong grounds to believe the direct reverse; he forbore, however, to express his opinion, but nevertheless it tended, in no small degree, to flatter his self-love, and to convince him that he was not wholly indifferent in the eyes of the lovely being whose society he was then enjoying.

Whether however their meeting was accidental or premeditated, there was one very delicate point yet to manage, and that was the mode of their separation. For Hector to accompany them back to their residence would be the very height of indiscretion; the circumstance of their having been seen in each other's

company would, in a moment, be buzzed in every direction where they were known; it might extend to a quarter where most of all it should be concealed, and the result might be an estrangement from each other for ever for the future; but then, on the other hand, to request him not to accompany them might be construed into an act on their part of rudeness and unkindness; independently of which it might be a tacit avowal that they were conscious to themselves that they had not been acting according to the most rigid rules of decorum, or else why be ashamed or afraid of being seen in his society? It was, however, a matter in which scarcely any choice was left, and Julia was on the point of informing Fitzallan of the necessity of their now separating, when on a sudden the noise of steps immediately behind them attracted their notice, and, looking round, they discovered the unwelcome intruder to be no other person than Mr. Monckton. Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of the party, they could not have risen with greater promptitude; and on the countenance of all of them sat the utmost confusion and embarrassment, while on that of Monckton shone the smile of malicious triumph in having thus so unexpectedly detected the parties in their clandestine meeting.

"I hope," said Monckton, addressing himself to the ladies, "that you will accept of my apology for thus so suddenly breaking in upon your company; but in reality you must believe me when I say, that I did not know on whom I was intruding, or I would certainly have directed my steps another way."

This might or it might not have been true on the

part of Monckton, but it did not tend by any means to relieve the parties from their embarrassment ; and, addressing himself to Fitzallan, he said, " By heavens, Fitzallan, you are one of the most enviable of human beings, to be thus selected as the companion of two such youthful beauties."

" Selected, Sir," said Fitzallan, " I cannot flatter myself that there is any selection for me to be proud of. I have been, it is true, honoured by the society of Lady Amelia Fortescue and her friend, but it was an event which I could not have expected, nor am I vain enough to deem myself for a moment worthy of their particular attention."

" I presume not," said Monckton, " to question the motive of either Lady Amelia or Miss Manners, and in fact their well-known virtues and characters place them beyond the suspicion of the slightest deviation from propriety or decorum. I, however, regret much my unseasonable intrusion, and I can only repeat, that I hope my apology will be accepted."

" Most certainly, Mr. Monckton," said Julia ; " at the same time I do not see that any apology on your part is required ; you have not given any intentional offence, and where no offence is given on the one side no pardon can be required from the other."

" It is the very sentiment I should have expected to hear from the lips of Miss Manners," said Monckton, " and it gives me no little satisfaction to know that I have not incurred her displeasure ; as to my friend Fitzallan, I know the liberality of his disposition too well, to suppose for a moment,

that this trivial affair will in any degree lessen the esteem which he has hitherto entertained for me."

"Where I have once given my esteem," said Fitzallan, "it is not a trifle which can diminish or destroy it; and in the present case, I do not see any grounds for a quarrel, or even of the slightest difference between us; therefore, I think it the better plan to desist from the present subject altogether."

"I perfectly agree with Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia; and with that *naïveté* so natural to her, she said, "I suppose, Mr. Monckton, you intend to be present at the General's masquerade?"

"It would give me great pleasure," said Monckton, "to be a Pyramus to Miss Manners's Thisbe."

"I cannot pretend to say," said Julia, "what sort of a Pyramus you would make, but I am afraid I should make but a sorry Thisbe: but do favour us with your opinion as to the character most fitted for Mr. Fitzallan. I think the one he has chosen not at all suitable to him."

Monckton was now on the point of obtaining the very information for which Adeline Gordon had despatched him in search of Fitzallan, and he secretly congratulated himself with the success which awaited him, without his being obliged to show any particular anxiety in obtaining it. Nor did his dark and treacherous soul delight itself only with the obtaining of the wished-for information, but in the detection of Fitzallan with Lady Amelia he had become privy to a circumstance, which he was resolved to make known in a certain quarter, and thereby with one blow level

to the ground the entire fabric of his future happiness.

“ If I might presume to recommend,” said Monckton, “ a character to Fitzallan, it should be that of Don Juan.”

“ Don Juan !” exclaimed Lady Amelia, “ why he has chosen the very reverse of it, he has selected the character of a Carmelite monk.”

“ On purpose,” said Monckton, “ that many a pretty nun may confess to him all her wanderings and peccadilloes.”

“ And having heard them,” said Fitzallan, “ I trust I shall not show such a base and ungenerous disposition, as to promulgate them on the following day to every gossip’s ear who would listen to them.”

This was a home thrust on the part of Fitzallan; he knew it to be one of the dark shades in the character of Monckton to be the assiduous disseminator of every tale of scandal that floated on the feculent stream of public report ; but if Monckton were previously secretly hostile to him, this pointed allusion did not tend by any means to mitigate his resentment. He cast a look full of passion on Fitzallan, and it would, perhaps, have burst out into the most violent expressions, had it not been for the presence of the ladies, in whose good graces he did not wish to degrade himself; determined, however, in some respects to wound the feelings of Fitzallan, he said, “ I think I shall advise Miss Gordon to assume the character of a Lady Abbess; she will be a most appropriate companion for the Monk, and one I am certain which will not be disagreeable to him.”

“I do not consider,” said Fitzallan, “that the society of Miss Gordon can be disagreeable to any one; and perhaps in my character as her confessor, I should hear of the many vows of constancy and attachment which certain of her admirers have sworn to maintain, at the same time, that a moment before, they have been swearing the same vows to another;—but I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing another lady there of the name of Arnfeld—what her confession to me will be, I leave to the more experienced judgment of others to decide.”

“Sir,” exclaimed Monckton, maddening with rage, “did I consider you as my equal, I would this moment chastise you on the spot for your presumptuous allusion—but I shall know how to make you feel the consequences of your insolence.”

“You will find me your equal, if not your superior, in every thing,” said Fitzallan; “and as to your threats, I treat them with indifference and contempt.”

“Lady Amelia, and Miss Manners,” said Monckton, “my knowledge of the character and manners of a gentleman tells me not to carry on this altercation any further in your presence. I therefore take my leave;” and darting the look of a fiend on Fitzallan, he hurried away.

“Let the galled jade wince,” said Fitzallan,—“but you appear alarmed, Lady Amelia. I regret much that this scene should have taken place in your presence and in that of Miss Manners, but I hope you will admit that it was not brought on by myself; had I submitted to listen to his venomous insinuations

without a reply, there is no saying to what lengths he would have gone."

"I know not how to account for it," said Julia, "but I always feel a kind of horror when I am in the company of Mr. Monckton."

"It is to the consequences that I look," said Lady Amelia, "and I regard it as the forerunner of a storm that will soon burst upon us."

"There are those," said Fitzallan, "who, under any circumstances, are able and willing to protect you; the real coward is always a blusterer."

"But the tongue of a coward is a dangerous weapon," said Julia, "and therefore it is my opinion, that the sooner we present ourselves at our home the better; under the present circumstances, Mr. Fitzallan, we will dispense with you accompanying us—therefore, Adieu!—to our next meeting at the masquerade."

"I perceive the propriety of that step," said Fitzallan; "your peace and safety ought to be my first consideration—you will perhaps not forget the Carmelite monk."

"Nor you the Franciscan nun," said Lady Amelia, tendering her hand to Fitzallan.

"She shall be the first object of my search," said Fitzallan, pressing the hand of the lovely girl.

"I will be a guardian angel," said Julia, and if danger threaten you, I will be at your side—*Adieu . au revoir.*"

The two lovely girls bounded away, leaving Fitzallan in a state of rapture, for that he was loved by Lady Amelia her every word and action plainly told

him. He stood and followed them with his eyes; they were now on the point of turning an angle in the road, which would hide them from his view. Lady Amelia on a sudden stopped, looked back towards the spot where Fitzallan was standing; she kissed her hand; Fitzallan returned the salutation, and pondering on the blissful scenes that awaited him, he took a different road, which led to the town.

CHAPTER XI.

Love's cherished gift, the rose he gave, is faded,
Love's brighter flower can never bloom again ;
Weep for thy fault, in heart and mind degraded,
Weep, if thy tears can wash the stain away.
Call back the vows that once to heaven were plighted,
Vows full of innocence, of love, and truth,
Call back the scenes in which thy soul delighted,
Call back the dream that bless'd thy early youth.

HIS heart surcharged with malice and rancour, Monckton joined Adeline Gordon at the theatre. She was surrounded by some of those buzzing coxcombs who flutter round a celebrated beauty, whispering sweet nonsense in her ear, and who think to gain a woman's heart by a display of the emptiness of their heads, and the namby-pamby effeminacy of their manners. The reception which Adeline gave to Monckton was more distant and restrained than usual ; but, ignorant of the real cause, he attributed it to the mere humour of the moment, or to that desire which women in general always evince to conceal their real feelings on those points, where the heart is supposed to have the greatest interest. Monckton was not only disliked but dreaded by his companions ; and they no sooner saw him enter the box, than they one by one retired and left him to the undisturbed enjoyment

of the society of Miss Gordon and an elderly relative, who had accompanied her. He immediately proceeded to inform her of his success in having obtained the knowledge of the character in which Fitzallan was to appear at the masquerade ; and consequently, that he would pay her a visit on the morrow to arrange in what manner their plans against him were to be carried into execution. Having discharged himself of that part of his commission, he entered into a recital of the unexpected manner in which he had discovered Fitzallan and the ladies ; and it is not to be supposed from the baseness of his character, that in his narrative he considered himself under any restrictions to adhere to the truth ; on the contrary, he so falsified the whole affair, and gave such a colouring of guilt to it that could only have been invented by a fiend who was bent on the destruction of human happiness. He entered into a minute description of the particular attitude in which he found them, and it was so very different from the reality, that the purity of the character of the females became a very questionable subject. According to his description, he found Lady Amelia sitting on the knee of Fitzallan, and that having observed them for some time at a distance, he repeatedly saw Fitzallan kissing the lips of Lady Amelia, whilst her arms were thrown around his neck ; and that when he came suddenly upon them, their confusion was so great that Lady Amelia fainted in Fitzallan's arms.

Monckton thought by this inflammatory recital to impart particular delight to Adeline, and thereby to ingratiate himself still deeper in her esteem ; but, so

erroneous sometimes are the calculations in which certain individuals are apt to indulge themselves, respecting the issue of their nefarious practices, that Monckton found himself most egregiously mistaken. Every word that he uttered was a dagger to the heart of Adeline. It was to her a draught of the bitterest wormwood; for in regard to the virtue or the innocence of either Lady Amelia or Julia Manners, she cared not if they were really deserving of the character which Monckton had given to them; but to be informed that Fitzallan really loved Lady Amelia, and that he was by her loved in return—to see all the hopes that she had formed of effecting a conquest over his heart destroyed for ever—the messenger who could impart such intelligence to her, was in her eyes, at the moment, a most odious character. She could have expelled him from her presence, as one, who was breathing around her some pestilential airs, which were to blight her future happiness, and not being properly able to control her feelings, she expressed her determination to leave the theatre before the entertainment was over, and she immediately put her resolve into execution. The carriage, however, having been ordered at a later hour had not yet arrived, and Adeline, therefore, was either constrained to wait in the theatre until its arrival, or to accept the offer of Monckton to walk with her to her home. She preferred the latter plan, and would that the spirits who watch over injured innocence had, on this night, been more attentive to the trust reposed in them.

Adeline and her worthless companion had not

proceeded far on their homeward route, when on the opposite side of the street they beheld two persons, one of whom appeared to be a female almost in the last stage of exhaustion, and who, in her efforts to advance, was supported by her companion, who seemed to behave to her with the utmost kindness and delicacy, and who cheered her on by words of the most affectionate import. The dress of the female appeared to be in great disorder, and by her general appearance, the casual observer would have denounced her to belong to that class of unfortunate creatures who gain their sorry meal, and a pillow often moistened with their tears, by prostitution—tears which memory draws from its cells, when she, in one of her most officious moods, holds up to them the picture of what they once were. There was, however, something in the conduct of those persons so very peculiar, and so little harmonizing with the suspicions that Monckton entertained as to the character of the parties, that his curiosity was particularly excited to ascertain their real condition. They stopped for a moment to watch their motions, and it struck Monckton, on a sudden, that the sound of one of the voices was perfectly familiar to him, and urged on by a particular impulse, he determined to satisfy himself of the fact. Influenced, however, by a different principle, Adeline requested him to make the necessary inquiries, for if relief were actually necessary, it should not be withheld. Monckton crossed the street and followed the couple at some distance ; the certainty was now clear to him—it was Fitzallan ; and of the character of the female with whom he was

in company, in his own mind not the slightest doubt remained. To Monckton she appeared to be in the worst state of intoxication ; every moment she would have fallen to the ground, had she not been upheld by Fitzallan, who continued to cheer her up, assuring her that he was not far from his residence, where every care and attention should be bestowed upon her. Monckton also heard Fitzallan say something of the villainy of her seducer, but although the night was dark, he dared not approach so near as to catch every word that was uttered. He, however, had heard and seen enough to satisfy himself of the identity of the person ; and with that malicious triumph which only a base and ignoble soul can feel in the supposed detection of another's fault, he hastened back to Adeline. " Here's a fine discovery," he exclaimed, on joining her, " I always thought the morality and virtue of Fitzallan to be all assumed, and my suspicions are now verified."

" Fitzallan !" exclaimed Adeline, " what of him ?"

" O, nothing remarkable—a mere trifle—an everyday occurrence," answered Monckton, with a sneer, " with this difference only, that some people have more skill than others in concealing it from the world."

" But you surely do not mean to insinuate," said Adeline, " that the person whom you have just now been watching is Fitzallan ?"

" I not only mean to insinuate it, but to assert it," said Monckton.

" And his companion ?" asked Adeline.

" That is a subject," said Monckton, " on which

delicacy forbids me to converse with you, but your own powers are sufficiently acute to determine at once the nature of her character, and, consequently, how very improper a companion Fitzallan has shown himself for the virtuous part of the female sex."

This insinuation went deep to the heart of Adeline—the sting of the serpent was too visible, but she possessed sufficient penetration to discover that the sole intent of Monckton was to degrade Fitzallan in her good opinion, with the expectation that in proportion as Fitzallan fell, he himself should rise. Monckton, however, derived little advantage from his unprincipled attempt; on the contrary, he had not acquired any correct knowledge of the real character of Adeline; he judged of her by the common standard of other women, and therefore treated her as if she possessed the mean and petty disposition, which yields to every influence of jealousy, and will co-operate in any design, however degrading and pitiful, by which the object which excites that jealousy can be destroyed. Adeline was fully aware of her own powers; they had hitherto never failed in gaining the end desired; her plans were the result of her own invention, and the instruments which she chose to effect their accomplishment were fixed upon by her own penetration and acuteness. If it had been the wish of this extraordinary girl she could have held a hundred suitors in her chains, but she despised the common every-day character, which possesses such a strong affinity to the mill-horse as never to digress from a beaten path, and to have all its motions directed by the authority and control

of others. The conquest of such men she deemed not worthy of her trouble, but there was something in the character of Fitzallan which appeared to indicate an originality of action—a spirit that would not be controlled by the opinion of others—an independence of mind which sought for its resources within itself—and a stern and inflexible principle, which led her to conclude that if she could once gain his affections, they were hers for ever. The intent of Monckton, therefore, wholly failed in the design which he had in view; and in some degree his insinuations had a direct contrary effect to that which he expected, for, so far from injuring Fitzallan in her good opinion, she resolved to employ every art to attach the young libertine, as she supposed Fitzallan to be, more closely to her, and the whole of her ambition now seemed to be either by the force of her affection, or by stratagem and intrigue, to break asunder every connexion which Fitzallan might have formed with other females, and to reign herself sole empress of his love.

Discoursing on the relation which could possibly exist between Fitzallan and his midnight associate, they arrived at the door of Adeline's house, and Monckton having promised to pay her an early visit on the following morning, they separated, but not until Monckton had promised to obtain all the information in his power respecting the character and condition of the female associate of Fitzallan.

Monckton had penetration sufficient to discover that the interest which Adeline took in this adventure did not proceed from a common cause; he sus-

pected that she had imbibed an ardent attachment for Fitzallan, and therefore, as far as his machinations could extend, his ruin was determined on. His accidental discovery of Fitzallan with Lady Amelia gave him a powerful instrument in his hand towards the accomplishment of his purpose, and he doubted not that he should be able to effect his immediate and disgraceful dismissal from all further intercourse with her family ; for, under the well-known circumstances in which Lady Amelia then stood, as the betrothed bride of another, the promulgation of a clandestine meeting with a young man of ignoble birth, and of no hereditary pretensions to exalted rank, could not fail to be followed by the excitement of the utmost indignation on the part of her parents, and the immediate issue from them of the most imperative mandate to their daughter to hold no further acquaintance with him ; independently of which it might further operate as a strong inducement on the part of her family to expedite her marriage, and thereby frustrate at once any vain pretension which Fitzallan might have entertained to the affections of Lady Amelia.

In regard to the estimation in which Fitzallan was held by Adeline, there also he beheld the prospect opened before him of subjecting him to the most mortifying degradation. In the discovery of an intrigue with an abandoned female, he considered that ample materials were put into his hands wherewith to destroy any latent affection which might have arisen in the breast of Adeline for him, and he therefore determined, when he parted with her,

to hasten back to the house in which Fitzallan resided, and obtain some further information of the real condition of the female, and the exact relation in which she stood with Fitzallan.

He had not proceeded far when in the distant gloom he observed a man approaching him, who, by the singularity of his actions, excited his particular attention. At one time he stood still—held his hand to his forehead—his head directed upwards, as if muttering some half unintelligible prayer to his God; then on a sudden he would dart forwards, waving the air with his arms, as if to remove every obstacle that might impede his progress. As he came near to Monckton, he exclaimed, “It is over—one deed more and I am at rest—the cold airs of death are flitting round me—it is but a moment, and the next all is hushed.” Monckton muffled himself up closely in his cloak, so that not a feature of his face could be discovered; he could not describe the feelings which assailed him, but an awful presentiment seemed to weigh heavily upon him, that a crisis was approaching which was to determine the future destiny of his life. On the mysterious stranger coming up to him, he started, exclaiming, “Ah! who art thou? This is the hour of sleep—it is only the wretched that are awake—I alone then, of all created beings, have a right to be awake; dost thou now cross me in my path to hold me from my intent, that the earth may not drink his blood—that the fiends of hell may not hear his expiring cries—and the deep curses of an injured father may not mingle with his last groan? Speak! what hast thou to do with me?”

The knees of Monckton tottered—a convulsive shudder shot through all his frame—he would have fled, but he felt himself almost rivetted to the ground—he saw himself on a sudden in the presence of the only individual in the world whom he feared most to meet. A breath, a word might detect him, and the consequences of that detection, he foresaw too well. He felt himself as if thrown on a sudden within the control of some avenging spirit, from whom no power was given him to escape. The terrors of darkness were around him, the silence of night conjured up before him a thousand phantoms, each more horrible than the former. He gasped for breath—shuddered—and made a sign for Arnfeld to pass on. “I will,” said he, in a softened voice, “but whither I know not.” He rested his head for a moment in his hand, as if anxious to collect his scattered senses. “Tell me, ere we part, perhaps thou art one like myself, driven out of the herd of human society, deeply, deeply steeped in wretchedness—but once thou still wert happy; perhaps thou hast heard a dearly beloved child lisping the name of father; as a father thou hast perhaps known the bliss of pressing to thy heart a virtuous child!”

Monckton shook his head, and leaned against the wall for support. “Then,” exclaimed Arnfeld, “hast thou never tasted the happiness of life! But hear me,” and he seized the arm of Monckton. “Ah! thou tremblest! At what? Thou dost not fear me? I never yet did harm to human creature—I never strangled the babe in the mother’s lap—I

never tore the father from the child—the child from the father—I never yet destroyed a daughter's virtue, and drove the father forth upon the world, a maddened, murdering maniac. Look at those stars in their everlasting radiance; she was once as pure as is their light, spotless as their glory, immaculate as their celestial origin: but he came, the damned fiend of hell, Monckton—the accursed villain came, stole into the sanctuary of my happiness, the home of my dearest, fondest joys; around as fair a form as nature ever made, the serpent wound his treacherous coils; his polluted lips stole her first, her virgin kiss; breathed his perjured vows of everlasting love: to her heart she pressed the hellish traitor; the day was fixed when she was to become his wife, but mark—one night the fiend sat at my board; in the cup which I was accustomed to drink to the happiness of my child ere I retired to rest, he mixed the narcotic drug: the father slept midst visions of future bliss; he woke in racking torments, in all the bitterness of mental anguish, in the dread certainty that a father's dearest, fondest hopes were ruined,—blasted for ever. There is not a stone, nor tree, nor living being to whom I will not tell my griefs; a thousand times I have told them to my God, and have they not been heard? yes, he has given them to his angel of retribution to hold them in his keeping until the hour arrives when his vengeance will be hurled on the head of the murderer of the innocence of my child."

Monckton spoke not, he wished almost that the earth would open beneath him and engulf him: he made a motion to escape. "Stop," exclaimed Arn-

feld, "ere we part, I have one boon to ask of thee, and then onwards to my fate. Give me thy hand; 'tis as cold and clammy as if death had stricken it: there—there is mine—tremble not; with that pressure I, Alfred Arnfeld, thrice curse the man, who is the seducer of my child,—curse him!! curse him!! curse him!! Thou hast heard my tale of grief, wilt thou not curse him also? Curse him, and I will give thee my benediction: curse him, and I will fall on my knees and kiss thy feet. Why hesitate?—curse him, I demand it of thee; it will be a solace to my heart to know that another's malediction than mine has been pronounced against him, that another's curse than mine will follow him to the judgment-seat of his God."

A dead silence followed. Arnfeld still held the hand of Monckton—it was a pause thrilling, agonizing, and to the pain of which no opiate could be administered to alleviate its intensity. "Curse him; I again call upon thee to curse him," said Arnfeld, in a deep expressive tone. Monckton appeared on a sudden to rouse all the energies of his nature; a spirit of vigour and power seemed to be suddenly infused into him; he stood on the verge of desperation, —when cowards even exhibit a degree of boldness of which under any other circumstances they would be incapable. "Dotard," he exclaimed, levelling him at the same time with the ground by a blow, "wouldst thou have me curse myself?" and thus saying, he fled with the utmost precipitation.

"Hell-hound of earth!" exclaimed Arnfeld, rising from the ground; "and is it thou then whose hand I

have been grasping?" He took a pistol from his pocket, and fired it in the direction which Monckton had taken, but he had gained too great a distance for the shot to take effect.

"But I'll follow thee," exclaimed Arnfeld, "and be it to the verge of the earth." His senses maddening with anger and revenge, Arnfeld rushed along the streets, but no signs of his victim presented themselves. Heedless of surrounding circumstances, his whole soul absorbed in one great, overpowering object, he found himself on a sudden at the outskirts of the town; weary and exhausted, faint with anguish of mind and body, he seated himself on a trunk of a tree, which lay by the road side. The morning found him there, his grey locks dropping with the dew, himself an expressive spectacle of the extreme of human wretchedness.

It was some time before Monckton halted in his flight; every noise he heard conveyed to his ears the sound of the footsteps of his pursuer, but his breath ultimately failed him, and he stopped,—he listened, all was still; his respiration became more easy, he began to shake off the impression which the sudden rencontre with Arnfeld had made upon his mind, and he rose a few degrees in his own opinion for the bold and resolute manner in which he had put an end to the scene. In the hurry of his flight, the particular route which he took was wholly indifferent to him, and when he stopped, he found himself within a few paces of the house in which Fitzallan resided. This circumstance for a time expelled from his mind every relation to his scene with Arnfeld, and Fitzallan and

his female associate now absorbed the whole of his attention. He directed his eyes to the apartment which he knew was occupied by Fitzallan. Lights were still burning in it, and it was evident by the shadows that flitted across the blinds, that the inmates had not yet retired to rest. Here was some food for the malicious and illiberal spirit of Monckton to gloat upon. The degenerate mind will see depravity in the actions of a Howard, or of any other genuine philanthropist ; it will see a sin in the purity of an angel's kiss, and the construction which Monckton now put upon the actions of Fitzallan, could only have been engendered in a heart like his. He now considered that he had obtained so much information, as he could work up into an act of positive delinquency, to report to Adeline on the morrow, and he therefore determined to hasten home, and recover himself from the perturbation which late events had caused in his mind. He was on the point of retiring, when his attention was suddenly attracted by observing the door of Fitzallan's house gently open, and he presented himself, to all appearance equipped for travelling. Monckton immediately concealed himself within the door-way of the opposite house. Fitzallan stood for a moment on the threshold, looking cautiously around him, and then, locking the door after him, directed his steps in a hasty manner down the street. Monckton followed at a distance, determined to obtain correct information of this mysterious conduct of Fitzallan, and he saw him at last stop at the gate of the principal inn of the town, into which, after having rang the bell furiously for some time, he was

admitted: his stay there, however, was but momentary. "Let it be got ready immediately," he was heard to say as he left the inn, and, having received an affirmative answer, he hurried back to his house. "What can all this mean?" said Monckton to himself. "Where there is mystery there is evil, at least so the world judges it; but yet I know Fitzallan to be too good and virtuous to suspect him of being engaged in a work of immorality or villainy; but still it has the semblance of it, and that is enough for me:" it is enough also for the world, for the world often passes its judgments on the actions of men more from semblance than from any well-founded knowledge of their real principles. The lights in Fitzallan's apartment were now seen passing to and fro with rapidity: the parties within appeared to be in an unusual bustle, and once Fitzallan was seen to open the window, and, by his gestures, to listen for some expected object. At this moment Monckton caught a glimpse of the female on retiring from the window; she threw her arms around the neck of Fitzallan, and appeared as if she were overcome with the intensity of her feelings. Fitzallan pressed her to his heart, the shutter was closed, and Monckton could see no more.

The distant rolling of a carriage now suddenly attracted the attention of Monckton; it approached at a rapid rate towards the place where he was standing, and in a few minutes it stopped at the door of Fitzallan's house. The parties within appeared to be in full readiness. Scarcely a moment was lost; Fitzallan appeared supporting his almost lifeless companion; they entered the carriage; Fitzallan was

heard to enjoin the postilion to use the utmost expedition ; it drove off, leaving Monckton in a state of wonder and surprise.

That Fitzallan was engaged in the abduction of some female was now fully clear to Monckton, but the great difficulty rose in fixing upon the identical individual. Monckton was himself a libertine, and therefore it was his pride to think that every other person was as profligate as himself ; but it is a principle that is fully in accordance with the general depravity of our nature. We are too prone in the usual affairs of life to constitute ourselves as the standard by which we are to judge of the actions of others ; and in some instances there are those conceited, inflated individuals, who arrogate to themselves the right of laying down a rule of action for others, according to their own narrow and contracted views and prejudices ; and further, they presume to stigmatize a departure therefrom as a direct infraction of the established rules of morality. In the present case, however, Monckton could not have selected an individual more improper wherewith to compare himself than Fitzallan ; nevertheless he had formed too just an estimate of his character to suppose that he would engage himself in any immoral transaction with a female, if the affections of his heart were not engaged in it, and therefore Monckton began to compare the figure of the fugitive lady, as far as he could obtain a glimpse of it, with that of any well-known favourite of Fitzallan's, and the result of that comparison was, that the figure of the lady corresponded in every respect with that of Lady Amelia Fortescue ; and

before Monckton reached his home, it was a settled point in his own mind, that the fugitive was no other personage than her Ladyship, and that the whole plan of the elopement had been arranged at their clandestine meeting in the morning. This was a very wise and rational conclusion, and it showed that he knew as much of the real character of the respective parties, whom he was thus scrutinizing in his own mind, as a Mussulman knows of Moses. He had, however, one certain method of ascertaining the route which the lovers had taken, and the retreat which they had chosen in which to hide their love from the world, by questioning the postilion who had driven them ; and with the determination of making the necessary inquiries at an early hour in the morning, he regained his home, by no means at rest concerning the events of the night.

CHAPTER XII.

Love should in secret like the sun
Burn though a world should shade it,
But show its source of heat to none,
Except that God who made it.

THE family of the Glencoes, who had now taken up their abode in the town for the season, were seated at breakfast; the topic of their conversation, the extraordinary preparations which were making by General Hamilton for the approaching masquerade, when a letter was delivered to the Earl, which the footman reported had been delivered by a stranger, who desired that it might not be delivered into any other hands than those of the Earl himself. Whilst he was breaking the seal, he said to Lady Amelia, his daughter, "You have then, my dear, fixed upon the character in which you will appear."

"I have, father," answered Lady Amelia, "and I think a Franciscan nun will be a very becoming one."

"Rather out of keeping," said the Earl, "for a lady whom I hope to see a bride in a few weeks."

"Strange! very strange!" said the Earl, as he read the letter, and appeared for a moment to be lost in thought.

"I hope no unpleasant intelligence is contained

in that letter," said the Countess, who had observed the sudden change in the countenance of the Earl on finishing the perusal of the letter.

"Nothing—nothing very important," answered the Earl, putting the letter into his pocket, and the conversation resumed its former course. Still, however, it was evident that the contents of the letter had thrown the Earl into an abstraction of thought by no means natural to him; and so prone are we when we are conscious to ourselves that we have been guilty of any impropriety of conduct, to consider that every circumstance which transpires has some reference to the detection of it, that Lady Amelia began to fear that some malicious person had in the letter informed her father of her clandestine interview with Fitzallan on the preceding morning; and with this persuasion on her mind, she scarcely dared to lift her eyes, dreading to meet the sternness of the parental frown.

"I wish," said the Earl, "that the General had chosen any other species of entertainment than a masquerade wherewith to amuse his company. I am by no means friendly to such motley meetings, where disguise and concealment offer so many opportunities to the professed libertine to take those advantages which are fraught with so much danger to the female character."

"Your objection, I admit, may hold good," said the Countess, "in a public masquerade, where all characters are indiscriminately admitted, where decency and decorum are openly violated, and where the vice which dares not show itself in the open day becomes, as it were, the very aim and intent of the entertain-

ment ; but in select society, where the invitation on the part of a respectable and distinguished individual, as in the present case, presupposes a guarantee for the correctness and propriety of the conduct of his visitors, I hold it rather squeamish and fastidious to attach criminality to a harmless display of mirth, and to suppose that under every mask lurk vice and contamination."

"You mistake me wholly," said the Earl ; "I hope I possess too much liberality of mind, and too enlarged a knowledge of the world, to denounce all to be delinquents who frequent a masquerade ; it is the abuse of such meetings of which I complain ; besides you must convince me that the display of mirth evinced even at a select masquerade is quite so harmless as you represent it ; we know well to what harmless mirth, as it is called, often leads—especially if it be carried on under a mask. I delight in mirth, abstractedly considered, but I will venture to pronounce that many a girl, even in our sphere of life, has reason to rue the hour, when, under the pretence of enjoying a little harmless mirth at a masquerade, she has taken the advantage, which the assumption of a fictitious character so readily affords her, of perhaps carrying on an intrigue with an undeserving object, an individual who in rank, birth, expectations, and pretensions, is far beneath her, and who, perhaps, would never be admitted into her family but in the capacity of a menial."

The feelings which at this moment agitated the bosom of Lady Amelia may be easily conceived. She cast an expressive glance towards her friend Julia,

and the look which was returned, did not tend to allay her confusion. The pointed allusion of her father, so applicable to her own situation, could not, in her opinion, possibly have any other reference than to her intrigue with Fitzallan. To look her father in the face at that moment would have been impossible, and had he addressed himself to her, her extreme embarrassment could not have failed to raise some very alarming suspicions in his breast, which, if they had undergone a thorough investigation, would have led to the full discovery of her secret attachment, and the consequent destruction of her dearest hopes.

Fortunately, however, for Lady Amelia, her father continued to address himself to her mother until her confusion had wholly subsided, and she had recovered her wonted composure; when, turning to her, he said, "Can you explain to me, my dear, your particular reason for selecting the character of a Franciscan nun? a nun at a masquerade is as inconsistent as a pope dancing a quadrille, or a harlequin in a methodist conventicle. In what manner do you mean to sustain the character? by counting your beads and muttering your paternosters? if so, I fear you will prove rather a nuisance than an acquisition to the company."

Lady Amelia felt herself greatly relieved in finding her father treating the subject thus jocosely; and she answered, that she was more indebted to her friend Julia for the selection of the character, than to any predilection on her own part.

"Then I suppose," said her father, "you would

not feel any objection to change it to any other character which I might propose to you."

This was a proposition totally unexpected by Lady Amelia; the very change of character might defeat all the plans which she had laid for her stolen interviews with the Carmelite monk, and she hesitatingly replied, that she had been at considerable pains in preparing her dress for that character, and that as the masquerade took place in a few days, she feared she should not have time to prepare another.

"That is an objection," said the Earl, "which we will soon surmount; have you any other to make to a change of character?"

Lady Amelia was now driven to the last resource. "I should not like," she said, "to assume a character, which requires any great talent or particular qualification to support, and, for that reason, I considered the character of a Franciscan nun as falling exactly within the scope of my abilities; besides, my dear father, you must admit, that the demure and formal character of a nun, repulsive in its very nature, possesses this advantage, that it operates as a check to any of those rude advances to which a more sprightly character would subject me."

"I admit the truth of that remark to a certain extent," said the Earl, "still I am not quite certain whether your appearance in that character would not subject you to greater annoyance, than if you selected one of a more equivocal nature. Consulting my own disposition, I should say, that I should select a nun at a masquerade as the most favourite object of my annoyance; there is something pleasing in the idea

of turning hypocrisy and bigotry into ridicule ; and I am not aware of any character which furnishes that satisfaction more abundantly than the forced and unnatural character of a nun ; therefore on these grounds, your objection is not tenable. But there is another point : have you ever consulted your intended husband on the choice of your character ? I should think he was the first person whom you would have consulted ; at all events, he should be apprized of the character in which you intend to appear."

" I have always understood, my Lord," said Lady Amelia, " that the ignorance which other persons have of the character which is assumed, forms one of the chief amusements of the scene ; for there is no real difference between a masquerade and a common ball room, if all be privy to each other's character."

" And therefore," said the Earl, " you have not made known to Sir H. Montfort the character in which you intend to appear ?"

" I cannot entertain the slightest objection," said Lady Amelia, " to Sir H. Montfort's knowing the character which I have selected ; on the contrary, I believe that he is fully aware that I shall appear as a nun."

" Indeed !" said the Earl, rather struck with this acknowledgment on the part of Lady Amelia, " then I have a plan in my head, which will afford us considerable amusement. Julia shall appear as the Franciscan nun, and you shall appear as a vestal of the sun. It will be a source of great amusement to me, to see Sir H. Montfort paying his addresses to

the nun under the supposition that he is paying his court to his future bride ; let it, therefore, be arranged accordingly. The dress of a vestal requires very little preparation ; you remember seeing it personified in the play of Pizarro, and a few hours, with a little extra assistance, will be sufficient to prepare the dress."

The Earl rose from the table, and he was followed by the Countess into the library, which they had no sooner entered, than his Lordship put the following letter into her hands, saying, "I fear there is some mischief attached to the advice contained in it." The letter ran as follows :

MY LORD,

Circumstances have come to my knowledge in which the welfare and interests of your family are specially concerned ; I, therefore, advise you, not to allow your daughter, Lady Amelia, to assume the character of a Franciscan nun at the masquerade of General Hamilton. No further explanation will at present be given. Beware !

Had the Earl been a strong-minded man, he would, perhaps, have treated this anonymous epistle with the contempt which it deserved, and have considered it as the act of some dastardly fellow, smarting, perhaps, under a supposed injury, or acting under the influence of revenge. The Countess declared, that if her noble husband had no other grounds for the change of character than the advice contained in that letter, she, on her part, would show the cow-

ardly writer, that they rejected his anonymous advice altogether, and she would recommend that Lady Amelia should appear in her original character. The Earl, however, had acted upon the impulse of the moment; and although on viewing the matter from every possible point, and still being unable to detect the slightest danger which could accrue to his daughter by the assumption of the character which she had selected, yet he resolved immediately to act upon the advice contained in the letter, and, in consequence, recommended to his daughter the proposed change. Suspicion, when once excited, catches hold of the minutest circumstances which can tend to confirm it, and the studied opposition which Lady Amelia gave to the change of character, and the artful and adroit manner in which she attempted to evade his objections, all tended to confirm the Earl that there was some good ground for the warning which he had received, and that some secret cause existed, which he could not solve, for her adhering so pertinaciously to the character which she had originally chosen.

The Countess ultimately coincided in the sentiments expressed by the Earl, and it was determined between them, that the most vigilant eye should be kept on the motions of Lady Amelia, in order to detect any clandestine transaction in which she might be engaged; in the mean time, however, that the contents of the anonymous letter should be kept a secret from her, and that she should be led to believe that the change in the character originated solely from the whim and caprice of the parent.

In all matters in which love has anything to do, and in the juvenile part of our life it mixes itself up in almost all our actions, it generally happens, that the prudence and boasted foresight of the parent are completely frustrated by the cunning and ingenuity of the daughter. At the very moment when the parent flatters himself with the consoling idea that he has completely outwitted the daughter, it generally happens that the daughter has completely outwitted him. If, therefore, it has ever happened, and happened it has ever since the human species began to multiply, that the daughter, from the single power of her own prolific brain has outwitted the father, what possible chance of success could the Earl expect to enjoy, when he had to contend with two sets of brains, and one of them in itself competent to hoodwink a far more shrewd and calculating head than nature had been pleased to put upon the shoulders of the Earl.

The Earl and Countess had no sooner left the breakfast room, and Lady Amelia and Julia were alone, than a deep consultation was held as to the dilemma in which they were thrown by the unexpected proposition of the Earl; an examination was also entered into as to the motives which could have induced his Lordship to interfere so peremptorily in the change of Lady Amelia's character, and having weighed the matter in every shape and form, they could not arrive at any other conclusion, than that it was the effect of mere whim, and as such, Lady Amelia was bound to coincide with the wishes of her parent; but the next and most material point to be remedied was, in what manner was Fitzallan to be

apprized of this change, and the ingenuity of the girls soon discovered that the Earl himself had very kindly, though, no doubt, very unintentionally, provided them with the very means of accomplishing their wishes. He had himself recommended that Julia should appear in the character of the Franciscan nun, "therefore," said the sprightly girl, "leave the remainder to me. I will soon guide the Carmelite monk to where he shall find the vestal of the sun."

Lady Amelia had exercised the greatest industry and perseverance in the preparation of her religious habit, but it was surprising how great were her exertions to complete her vestal dress. She declared to her father, that she was by no means displeased with the change; and that she considered the character of a vestal far more dignified and becoming than the sullen and taciturn one of a nun. The father was delighted with the obedience of the daughter to his wishes. It was an additional proof that she had no clandestine end in view in fixing upon her original character. The daughter secretly enjoyed her triumph over her father, the father secretly enjoyed the victory over his daughter.

We pretend not to have penetrated deeper into the mysteries of a woman's heart than any other earth-born creature; but we have by some means stumbled upon the opinion that nature has enveloped the heart of woman in a thousand folds, into which no one can penetrate, and in which the most skilful and cautious are often caught. We have, even in our juvenility, discovered that the wisest of men is nothing less

than a fool in the company of that woman, who has made up her mind to make him her dupe.

Feverish and unrefreshed, Monckton rose from his bed at an early hour, his mind distracted with the scenes of the preceding night, for he was now fully convinced that unless he could devise some measures for the removal of Arnfeld and the victim of his lawless passion from the town and neighbourhood, his life would soon become forfeited to the ungovernable fury of the former, and which never could be checked by any affection which the daughter might still entertain for him. He saw himself beset on all sides with danger, and there was only one way of averting it, and that was by leading the daughter of Arnfeld to the altar ; thereby making every possible atonement for the injury which he had committed. "Perish rather," he exclaimed, "than have recourse to such a dreadful alternative. I, the heir to a peerage, to a princely fortune, to sacrifice myself and all my splendid prospects in life, for a weak and foolish girl ! What, if the fruit fell at the first shaking of the branch ! it would have fallen to any other who had beheld its ripeness ; and should I not have been a fool to have turned away and left it to the first casual stranger, who might have been tempted by its beauty ? To talk of seduction, ruin, infamy, what are they after all ? they are mere words, signifying nothing in the present case : a humble, low, and poverty-stricken girl, who was simpleton enough to believe my protestations of love ; to puff herself up with the proud conceit that I should condescend to make her my wife ;

it is really laughable—and then this flustering—this cursing—this hurly-burly of the old doting father. What has he lost? his daughter is as good to him as before; she can dress his dinner as well, make his bed as well, read novels and romances until they both fall asleep, and then, suddenly awakening, mumble over their prayers, and pass the night in snoring and in dreaming; and then the pregnancy, what a fuss and a bother about it; what certainty have I that the little urchin will have a greater right to call me father than the commonest scavenger in the street? but I suppose I shall be obliged to allow her a few shillings a week for the support of the bantling. Well, I won't begrudge it them; it may enable the old man to take an extra glass of ale before he goes to bed, and instead of drinking to the happiness of his own daughter, as he was wont to do, he may now drink it to the health of her child."

Thus communed this profligate with himself, and he now determined to hasten to Adeline to convey to her the account of the mysterious proceedings of Fitzallan, and to lay such plans as would ultimately tend to alienate from him altogether the esteem and regard of Lady Amelia Fortescue. Not that he had any wish to ingratiate himself in her favour, but from some reason which he could not define, he had imbibed an inveterate hatred for Fitzallan, and which was not a little increased by the strong partiality which Adeline evinced for him. He had formed certain views regarding that beautiful girl, which he had no doubt, from the general volatility

of her character, that he should see ultimately accomplished, but not so long as Fitzallan held that ascendancy in her affections, which she did not, nor even appeared anxious to conceal. The very interference of his father in behalf of Fitzallan had augmented the dislike which he had imbibed against him, and the severe reproof which Fitzallan had given him in the presence of Lady Amelia and Julia respecting the daughter of Arnfeld, had roused every latent spirit of revenge in his breast, and, *coûte qui coûte*, the ruin of Fitzallan was determined on.

Previously to repairing to the house of Adeline, Monckton, for the purpose of gaining further information, determined to pay a visit to the inn from which Fitzallan had hired the chaise, with the hope of meeting with the postilion who had driven him, and thereby obtaining a direct clue to the place of concealment where Fitzallan had taken the lady. In an apparently careless and indifferent manner he entered the inn-yard, and being well known, he began to question the several postilions as to the journeys which they had lately taken ; from some he received a rebuff not of the most courteous kind, and from others he could only obtain a snap of the fingers, or some other similarly expressive action characteristic of the gentlemen of the saddle. Fortune, however, favoured him at last, for he observed a postilion rubbing down his horses at the further end of the yard, and he began to suspect that he might be the very individual who had driven Fitzallan and his fair fugitive. On approaching the postilion, Monckton overheard the following conversation,

which passed between the postilion and one of his companions.

"Rot these night jobs say I," said the postilion, "what's a man good for if he has not his proper rest? however, she's snugly housed for the present, and I wish I may drive them back again if I receive the same handsome fee."

"Had you far to go?" asked his companion.

"You know the pretty whitewashed cottage, covered with roses and honeysuckles, that stands near the fourth milestone on the road to —, it was but a trip, scarcely worthy of putting a harness upon a horse. But to all appearances their arrival was wholly unexpected, for the old lady of the cottage grumbled sorely at being taken so by surprise; but she soon altered her tone; you know, old boy, there are more ways than one of making a woman alter her tone."

"And what mattered that all to you," said his companion, "if he came down well with the *bustle*? Zounds, man, never complain; I'd bump the saddle all night to be paid as you have been."

"As to that," said the postilion, "I have no reason to complain of my night's job; he's a devilish generous *cove* that I drove, and considering the distance was so small, I got as much as if I had driven the whole stage; but, *mum*, it was high time he moved the lady somewhere, for, dang me, by her size, if I did not think that although I took up only two persons, I should set down three; but, after all, she is a sweet creature; I'd give all my wages for a kiss of her; but," continued the postboy, with that

impudent, significant look, which this class of people can so well assume, "I think it is not all right in that quarter; you know, Tom, what I mean; such sobbing, and such weeping, and then such loving, such affectionate behaviour on the part of the gentleman, and then such exclamations of Oh, my father, my dear father! Ay, ay, Tom, such will ever be the case when girls allow themselves to be driven by nature, before they have obtained a passport from the parson to travel the road they want."

The attention of Monckton was particularly excited by the latter remarks, for they went to prove that Fitzallan must have been engaged in some illicit amour, and that he had taken the precaution, under the covert of the night, to remove the object of his guilty passion to a distance.

"And pray," said Monckton, addressing himself to the postilion, "how do you know that the gentleman was not the husband of the lady?"

"Eh! and pray who are you," exclaimed the postboy, "that wants to know anything about the business? You may ask my horse if you like, but dang me if I will ever split against those who have behaved well to me, so do you ask me no more, or you'll get an answer that you won't like."

"Impudent fellow!" muttered Monckton, as he turned his back to leave the yard, "but I have heard as much as I want to know;" and, with his budget of inflammatory intelligence, he hastened to the residence of Adeline.

He found her at the breakfast-table, in all the voluptuousness of the morning *negligée*; an unusual

fire appeared to beam from her eyes. Health spread its freshest roses on her cheeks, the vermilion colour of her lips seemed as if it had been heightened by the glowing kisses of love, and the full and round form of her neck and bosom, partially exposed, gave to Monckton a foretaste of the heaven that awaited the individual who could call her his own. In one respect Monckton might have said,

*Vous êtes si bonne et si belle,
Vous possédez tant de vertus, d'appas,
Qu'en vous créant, Dieu, je crois, ne sût pas
S'il allait faire un ange ou bien un mortel.*

Never did Adeline appear to Monckton more lovely than at this moment. There was no act, however base, which he would not have committed to ingratiate himself with her. But Adeline was no ordinary character. Enthusiasm was her predominant trait; no obstacle was too great for her to surmount; if she had once fixed her mind upon the attainment of any particular object, and if that object had any relation with the affections of her heart, she would, like another Helen, have fired another Troy rather than see herself defeated. The affection which she had hitherto pretended to feel for the many suitors who had fluttered around her, was nothing more than an innate and an uncontrollable propensity to coquetry. It was her pride and boast to see them in her train, to see and know herself the object of the envy of those, to whom nature having denied the possession of personal beauty, hated her for the superabundance which had been so lavishly bestowed

upon herself. She was, however, now doomed to know what real love is—love in its most extended, comprehensive meaning—when it absorbs every feeling of the heart, and nothing is cherished but what has some relation with the beloved object. She was also destined to know some of the most poignant torments of love. The idol of her heart was Fitzallan; but then she had every reason to believe that he loved another; there was madness in the thought. What method then was to be devised to destroy that love? What stratagems were to be put in force by which the lovers might be estranged from each other, and yet to make it not appear that it was the effect of any premeditated design. These were the thoughts on which she dwelt in the silence of the midnight hour, when the form of Fitzallan, like some blessed vision, was hovering before her inflamed imagination; they were the first which assailed her in the morning, and they were then followed by resolutions which were to be carried into practice during the day, and the intent of which was to draw Fitzallan gradually within the sphere of her influence, which, as no human heart had yet been able to withstand, she doubted not, in the present instance, would prove equally powerful and victorious. In the accomplishment of these plans, however, an accomplice was necessary, one of a servile, slavish cast, who would not, before he was called upon to act, question the propriety or the morality of the deed, but who, according to the instructions given him, would rush headlong into it, although he might himself thereby fall into an abyss from which he could not afterwards extricate himself.

She was no stranger to the character of Monckton ; his frequent attempts to injure Fitzallan in her good opinion with the view of exalting himself had instilled into her heart a hatred of him, which she had a difficulty to conceal, and which nothing but the extraordinary command which she possessed over herself could prevent her at times from exhibiting. To bring this man under her complete dominion she saw herself obliged to use that familiarity and sociability which are so often interpreted into a degree of personal attachment ; and it was at once evident to her that to make him completely her dupe, she should be obliged to allow him the indulgence of the flattering belief that he had made an impression upon her heart, and that of all her suitors he was the most favoured. When, therefore, Monckton entered the breakfast-room, she received him with the greatest affability, and expressed herself highly pleased with his early visit. With great exaggerations and many severe reflections and aspersions on the character of Fitzallan, Monckton related the events of the preceding night. Although the beatings of Adeline's heart might have been almost heard, occasioned by the excess of her feelings at the discovery of this new amour on the part of Fitzallan, and attended too with such circumstances as might estrange him from his accustomed society altogether, yet she maintained such a complete control over herself, that Monckton secretly congratulated himself with the idea that he had so far degraded Fitzallan in the good opinion of Adeline, that she would scarcely consider him in future on

her part, as worthy of the slightest attention. Adeline had, however, in her own mind, fixed upon her mode of action ; for she determined that very day to extend her walk as far as the cottage to which Fitzallan had taken the lady, and there arrive at once at the truth of the actual relation in which they stood towards each other. There was, however, one subject which had secretly engrossed the attention of Adeline ; and from the success of which she expected to make considerable progress in her conquest of Fitzallan. She therefore purposely introduced the subject of the General's masquerade ; and, with the sole view, as she declared it, of exciting some pleasant confusion, she informed Monckton that she had devised a plan, which he must assist her in carrying into execution.

“ You ascertained,” she said, “ that Fitzallan is to appear as a Carmelite monk, and Lady Amelia as a Franciscan nun. Now, I know the Earl, her father, to be a weak and credulous man, and therefore we will despatch a letter immediately to him, cautioning him not to allow his daughter to appear in that character. Then I will myself assume the character of the nun, and Fitzallan will be thereby so completely duped, that whilst he thinks he is whispering his fooleries to Lady Amelia, I shall become the depository of all the secrets of their intrigue.”

“ Excellent !” exclaimed Monckton ; “ and how foolish Fitzallan will look when you unmask, and he discovers that his dear nun is no other person than Adeline Gordon.”

“ To carry on the imposition still further,” said

Adeline, "I intend that you shall appear in the character of a Carmelite monk, and I will contrive in the interim to ascertain the character which Lady Amelia has chosen; and then, as she will mistake you for Fitzallan, you will soon be able to discover the strength of her affection for him. Now, then, we will despatch the letter to the Earl without further loss of time."

Monckton seated himself at the writing-table, and penned the letter according to Adeline's dictation; the effect of which has been already described, and as far as human foresight could extend, her plans were likely to be crowned with success.

"Now," said Adeline, "lose no time in preparing your new dress; the time is short, and in this remote part of the country we have no opportunities of hiring dresses as in London. *Apropos*, you will be at Mrs. Thurston's rout to-morrow evening?"

"Certainly," replied Monckton. "I know Lady Amelia and Fitzallan are both to be there."

"A better opportunity cannot be afforded us," said Adeline, "of questioning Lady Amelia about her dress. *Au revoir*, I must repair to my toilette; for I assure you, Monckton," tendering her hand to him with that winning familiarity which penetrates so powerfully to the heart of man, "there are very few beside yourself, whom I would have admitted into my company in my present dishabille."

"The morning is fine," said Monckton, "and I will set forth on a voyage of discovery. I will try and obtain a glimpse of the little dove that Fitzallan has got engaged in the cottage."

“Defer your visit to that quarter until to-morrow,” said Adeline, “and I will perhaps accompany you; the chances are in my favour that I should make more important discoveries than ever you can effect. Now farewell.”

Adeline rose, and Monckton took his departure.

“Despicable creature,” said Adeline, as Monckton closed the door, “to puff thyself up with the belief that a love like mine could be bestowed upon a wretch like thou! Who would give away a crown to a beggar, a pearl to the wallowing beast? Mine is not the love of common natures—a mere grovelling passion, a transitory emotion, which boasts of no affinity to aught that is ennobling to the heart, or which could operate as an impulse to one great or glorious deed. Yet, it may be a love which the world, in its narrow-minded estimate of things, would visit with its condemnation. Be it so; I glory in it. I know that it is a love which heaven would approve; and can that, of which God approves, partake of guilt? What are to me the prejudices of the world, or the stale and fusty maxims of a cold, calculating prudence, which squares its actions according to a set of formal rules, which may be adapted for vulgar souls, but which the great and noble mind contemns. What are to me the chilling dictates of a forced morality, to which human beings in their apathy or their stupidity pretend obedience, but which the voice of nature commands them to infringe. Let me suppose two hearts called upon by nature, and that indefinable power which pervades all animated life, to love each other, and that they cling to each other with all

the truth and power of those sacred feelings, and the prejudices of the world were to step in, and with their condemnatory voice rend asunder a love like that; the option is mine to follow the prejudices of the world, or to taste the bliss of life in the enjoyment of my love. Would I not kneel at the shrine of the latter; and, pressing the idolized being to my heart, call upon my God to tell me if I err? I know not of two nobler beings upon earth than two lovers, who have been possessed of the courage to break through every form and ceremony which could lead to their separation, who could renounce a world in which the inhabitants of it are obliged to conform to a mode of conduct at variance with the first and noblest principles of their nature, and in the loneliness of some deep solitude be to each other what the whole world was to them before. Fitzallan and I in some deep sequestered spot,—the sun the witness of our love by day, the stars by night,—we should hear the roar of the contentions of the world at a distance; we would smile with contempt at their impotency, and pity those who, struggling in the fetters of prejudice, are ignorant in what the real bliss of life consists."

Thus communing with herself, Adeline found herself equipped for her morning expedition, and in a very short time she was on the road to the cottage. She had purposely desired Monckton to defer his visit, as she well knew that in his presence she should not be so well able to probe to the bottom the mystery of Fitzallan's amour; for any act that partook of curiosity or premeditated connivance might instil

an alarm into the minds of the inmates of the cottage, and thereby at once defeat the purport of her visit.

Adeline was now within sight of the cottage, when on a sudden she espied a person bending his steps towards it at a hurried pace, and whom, on a closer inspection, she discovered to be Fitzallan himself. He had a small basket in his hand, and under one of his arms a bundle, apparently containing apparel. This circumstance was confirmatory of the report of Monckton, inasmuch as it proved that Fitzallan was deeply interested in the affairs of the inmates of the cottage, but considering that it might frustrate all her plans, if she were to be detected by Fitzallan, she concealed herself in an adjoining copse until Fitzallan had taken his departure. His stay at the cottage was but for a few minutes, and having shaken an elderly female cordially by the hand, he retraced his steps towards the town. Secure from any further detection on the part of Fitzallan, Adeline emerged from her hiding place, and on her arrival at the cottage, the same female from whom Fitzallan had parted a few minutes before was still in the fore-garden, employed picking some flowers; the whole of the premises exhibiting an extraordinary scene of care and neatness. Pleading fatigue, Adeline requested permission to rest awhile, and her appearance indicating gentility and fashion, operated not a little to obtain an immediate acquiescence in her request. On entering, she was shown into a neatly furnished apartment, but in which not a single object presented itself, which by association could give her the oppor-

tunity of entering upon the subject of her visit. "You lead rather a lonely life here, madam," said Adeline.

"To me it is by no means lonely," answered the matron; "I have little to do with the world, and the world still less with me. I have mixed ere now in the busy scenes of life, but experience has taught me their frivolity and emptiness. I now enjoy more real satisfaction in the cultivation of my garden, and in the performance of my domestic duties, than I ever found in those scenes, which are falsely denominated those of pleasure and gaiety."

"I hope you are not so much the cynic," said Adeline, "as to deny that pleasure is natural to youth; and I admit that it is the privilege of age to be clamorous against it, because it can no longer enjoy it. You thought not pleasure always to be mere frivolity."

"It would be ridiculous in me to say so," said the matron, "but the pursuits by which pleasure is obtained are as different as the dispositions of mankind; each seeks for it according to his own taste and prejudices, and that which may be pleasure to me, may be an object of aversion to another."

"Then I suppose," said Adeline, "that your pleasure at present consists in living here by yourself alone?"

"I consider," said the matron, "that that individual only can be said to be alone, who has no resources within herself. With me each hour and day bring with them their accustomed duties, and in the

performance of them I find a regular and pleasing occupation, and an antidote to all ennui."

This was not exactly the kind of answer that Adeline wished to obtain from her, and in fact she could easily perceive that there was an embarrassment in the behaviour of the matron, which, perhaps, on ordinary occasions would not have excited any notice; but with the knowledge that there was something in the house which the matron had an interest in concealing, every word and gesture were scrutinized with an acuteness which, under any other circumstances, would not have been called into action.

The matron had scarcely given her answer to Adeline's question, when the cry of an infant was heard in the room above.

"I perceive you are not quite alone, madam," said Adeline, who now hoped that she had touched the key which would unlock the wished-for secret.

"No indeed, not at present," said the matron. "God help her, but she's a lovely creature, and she seems in this world to have had her share of suffering."

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Adeline, whose ears were all on the alert to obtain the wished-for intelligence.

"You know," said the matron, "that we poor doting affectionate women often commit those irregularities, for which they who seduced us from the path of virtue ought to be punished; not we, who are the seduced, but such is the illiberal practice of the world; the seducer struts away proud of his victory, boasts of the triumph, and the world visits him not

either with its indignation or its scorn.” Differently, however, is it constituted with the seduced. The poor girl who has been betrayed by the treachery and villainy of him, who has sworn to love her, is banished from society as some infectious being, with whom it is contamination to hold any intercourse. She looks around her in vain for an asylum in which she can hide her infamy from the world; it is refused her: broken-hearted, dispirited, and racked with despair, she becomes an outcast upon the world, and the heart which once beat with nature’s purest, fondest affections, becomes at last so familiar with misery and wretchedness, that every noble qualification which once adorned it is annihilated, and the last sad mournful spectacle is presented of an affectionate, generous, amiable, and confiding nature reduced to drag on the remainder of its life in ignominy and wretchedness.”

“The picture you have now drawn,” said Adeline, “I confess, is unfortunately too common in the world for me to dispute its existence, but I trust you have never witnessed a practical illustration of it.”

“Hush!” said the matron. “It becomes me not to betray the confidence that is reposed in me, nor is it my wish to pry further into the secrets of other people than they seem willing to disclose. I consider it to be rude, very rude, ma’am, to be always prying, prying into the affairs of others, when the knowledge of them will make you neither better, wiser, nor richer.”

“I agree with you perfectly, ma’am,” said Adeline, “in those sentiments; but in some cases our own

character is at stake, and then it becomes a duty on our part closely to investigate all matters which have any reference to the reputation of our associates or the inmates of our house. Thus, suppose, for instance, you were to admit a female into your house under any peculiar circumstances which demanded secrecy, might not your character receive so deep a wound as never after to recover from it?"

The matron stared with surprise, for she was now convinced in her own mind that Adeline was in some degree privy to her reception of an inmate in her house under some peculiar circumstances, and therefore, she felt herself rather in a dilemma as to the manner in which she was to act. Adeline was a woman too perfect in all the stratagems of her sex, not to know, that the surest way to attain to the knowledge of a secret, is to pretend that you already know it. Self-possession, so necessary in cases of this kind, was one of Adeline's most decided characteristics, and, with the aid of a little finesse, she so far succeeded, that the matron was thrown completely off her guard, and she began to be as communicative as if she had had a real confidant before her. "Certainly, certainly," she replied to Adeline's last remark, although not without some slight degree of confusion; "but you must allow that every thing depends upon circumstances; you will agree with me that it is very difficult to determine the degree of rectitude which belongs to an action; for that which under some circumstances would be highly reprehensible, may under others, be not only praiseworthy, but actually consistent with our duties as a Christian. It is by no

means unlikely that I might be blamed by the world for an action which I committed last night ; but I know the motive which actuated me, and I know also that I was prompted to the performance of it by a feeling of humanity and kindness."

"It might be deemed presumptuous in me," said Adeline, "to inquire into the nature of an action, which the world would condemn, and yet at the same time, that its motive could originate in the most amiable feelings of our nature."

"Few are the visitors," said the matron, "who frequent my cottage, but amongst them is a young man, who has been accustomed to extend his walks hither, and who has excited my good will by his unassuming manners, and the general knowledge which he displays. I much fear, however, that in an unguarded moment he has been the means of destroying the future happiness of a lovely girl ; for last night I was roused most unexpectedly from my sleep by the stoppage of a carriage at my door, and the young man of whom I have been speaking presented himself in a most flurried and agitated manner, beseeching me, under circumstances of the most urgent nature, to take under my protection an unfortunate lady, but for whose virtue and innate sense of goodness he would vouch, notwithstanding the very questionable situation in which she appeared."

"Is the young man a native of the neighbouring town?" asked Adeline.

"That is a question which I cannot answer," said the matron, "but I attained to the knowledge of his name by a book of which he made me a present, and

in which he inscribed it with his own hand ; this is the book," taking one from the bookshelf ; and Adeline on opening it, read " To Mrs. Gainsford, from Hector Fitzallan."

" I have heard his name often mentioned," said Adeline, " and always with respect."

" I mean not," said the matron, " to condemn him for the act of which we are now conversing, for I must necessarily be ignorant of the peculiar circumstances of the case ; it may after all be a mere act of humanity on his part, and I am the more disposed to attribute it to that motive, as he declared to me that he would see her injuries redressed. The removal of the poor girl must, however, have been effected under most extraordinary circumstances, for her perturbation on her arrival was so great as to cause the immediate birth of her child."

Adeline now perceived that she had gained from the matron all the information of which she was in search. She had obtained a sufficiency to ruin Fitzallan for ever in the estimation of Lady Amelia Fortescue, although in her own mind she was convinced, that the character of Fitzallan would come out from the investigation as pure as the metal from the crucible. The great question, however, which now arose in her mind, was the manner in which the information was to be conveyed to Lady Amelia, and on this head she determined to devise some plan with Monckton, by which it could be carried into immediate effect. Having apologized to Mrs. Gainsford for the long intrusion on her time, and paying her some very flattering compliments for the

humanity of her conduct, Adeline took her departure.

To the generous and philanthropic heart, there is no act more pleasing than that of effecting a reconciliation between an offended parent and an erring child ; and it was a task which Fitzallan now took upon himself. The information, perhaps, is not necessary, for it has doubtless been previously conjectured, that the unfortunate female, who had been saved on the preceding night by the humanity of Fitzallan, was no other person than Maria, the lovely daughter of Arnfeld ; and noble and disinterested as was the action, it threatened, by the deep machinations of Monckton, and the artful intriguing spirit of Adeline Gordon to be the precursor of the ruin of his future happiness.

Pitiable is the condition of a credulous doting girl, who, seduced by the arts and villainy of one, who at her feet, or whilst resting his head on her bosom, may have breathed the protestations of his everlasting love, and who afterwards having given to him the brightest jewel in her dowry, sees herself forsaken and cast upon the world to bear the full load of its obloquy and contempt ; but doubly is she to be compassionated, when she sees that by her weakness she has reduced an affectionate parent to a state of distraction, and at the same time that she is obliged continually to endure his taunts and reproaches, and his deep and unmerciful accusations. It was in one of the paroxysms of his distraction, that Arnfeld had proceeded to such personal violence against his daughter, that she, considering her life to be in mo-

mentary danger, hastily rushed out of the house, after feigning some excuse for leaving the room, and, scarcely conscious of her actions, hurried along the streets, when, to her great good fortune, she was met by Fitzallan, who, conducting her to his lodgings, afforded her every relief which his humanity and generosity could procure, and who hesitated not to obtain for her an asylum in the house of Mrs. Gainsford.

In the mean time Arnfeld sat in the deep gloom of his distracted spirit ; his head resting on his hand, and his vacant stare directed to the few embers which still glimmered in the grate, but which to his diseased mind presented to him the type of his own life—the next moment, perhaps, to be deprived of all warmth and spirit, and to be extinguished for ever.

As soon as the tumult of his passions had in some degree subsided, and reason had partially resumed its power, so as to enable him, with some degree of self-collection, to examine the mode of conduct which he was pursuing, he called upon his daughter to prepare for him his usual repast before retiring to bed ; but to his frequent calls, no answer was returned. “She is asleep,” he said. “Well ! I will not awaken her ; it is a temporary respite from misery—it is the last solace of the wretched ; then what must I be who know it not ? the sleep that comes over me is not one of rest—nor of forgetfulness. I continually see before me some damned fiend, laughing hellishly over my child. I see her writhing beneath his grasp—with a demon’s fury I rush forth to save her—I awake, and a drear and dread reality stands before me. I try to penetrate

the darkness that is around me, straining my vision, thinking that all may be a dream, and that I am in the presence of the accursed destroyer of my child, and I—I her only avenger. Another night is almost past, and the dawn of another day will soon break upon me; but in that day what deed may not be done! what eyes may not be closed in death! Oh God! that I had never been a father, or, being such, that I had felt no love, no fondness, no affection for my offspring; or that I had left it to be reared by stranger hands, heedless and careless of its future fate. Hark! what noise is that? it sounded like the moan of some departing spirit; or perhaps it was a groan issuing from the perturbed bosom of my child. But I'll be merciful to her even in my rage; in the deep indignation of my bitter resentment will I in her sleep be compassionate to her. But as to myself, I will hold no communion with sleep till I am avenged. With the first beam of light will I sally forth; I'll hunt the monster from haunt to haunt; the portals of hell are already open to receive him, and I will be the avenging spirit that shall sweep him from the earth, and send him to his account with all his crimes unrepented of."

The human passions are like the elements, the greater the violence, the shorter the duration. The rage of man in the extreme is like the hurricane, which threatens in its fury ruin and devastation to every object within its influence; but gradually it subsides; and, as if exhausted with the exertion, the elemental strife becomes hushed, and tranquillity rests upon the land. So stood it with Arnfeld;

weary and exhausted, his nature, as it were, deprived of all further exertion, he sank into that gloomy, cheerless, and fictitious state of repose, which neither recruits the animal powers, nor eases the perturbations of the mind.

With the earliest sound of motion in the streets, Arnfeld suddenly roused himself, and his first steps were directed to the bed-chamber of his daughter; but she was not there; and, by the appearance of the bed, it was evident that she had not been the tenant of it during the night. He stood for a moment aghast, and such a confusion of ideas rushed over his mind, that his powers of action became paralysed, and he stood as if some supernatural power had transfixed him to the ground. Slowly he recovered his self-possession, and throughout every part of the house he searched for his daughter, calling her by her name, but no answer was returned. "It is all too true," he exclaimed, "and I have then perhaps been her murderer also; but I'll search her through the world, and if she be dead, one grave shall hold us. Farewell," he said, as he threw his plaided cloak around him; "farewell! once thou home of my happiness; the sound of mirth will never again be heard within thy walls, and the stranger may come and find my chambers desolate, and I, their last tenant, a murderer." He rushed out of the house, and directed his steps—he knew not whither.

Hour after hour he pervaded every part of the town; to all inquiries respecting his daughter the most unsatisfactory answer was returned, and in some instances with laughter and ridicule. Weary, at

length he asked permission of a tradesman, who was a tailor, and with whom he was personally acquainted, to rest himself for a few moments in his shop ; and he was scarcely seated, when his attention was strongly excited by the following conversation.

“ This masquerade of the General’s,” said the tailor, “ has made the whole town alive ; milliners, haberdashers, and tailors, up to their ears in business.”

“ By the by, sir,” said one of the workmen, “ it was about half an hour ago that Mr. Monckton called to know when his dress would be completed.”

At the name of Monckton, Arnfeld started, and his whole frame appeared to quiver with agitation.

“ You informed him, I suppose,” said the tailor, “ that it would be sent home this evening. I should not have expected that he would have chosen such a character.”

“ May I—I inquire,” said Arnfeld, smothering his feelings as much as possible, “ may I venture to inquire what that character is ?”

“ It is that of a Carmelite monk, sir,” answered the tailor ; “ the last character, I should think, that a dissipated young man like him would have selected.”

“ A Carmelite monk !” muttered Arnfeld to himself : and a sudden thought appeared to flash upon his mind, while over his countenance came a hectic flush, as if some extraordinary passion were excited, and which, from its intensity, he feared would overcome him.

“ I feel no more fatigue now,” said Arnfeld ; and, thanking the tradesman for the accommodation, he hurried into the street. He no sooner found himself

at liberty, then he burst into a loud hysterical laugh, "Ha! ha! ha! Now thou villain I have thee; now, in the midst of thy mirth, shalt thou feel the strength of my avenging arm. I'll watch thee till I see thee dallying with some favoured beauty, whispering in her ear thy poisonous tale of love; and if I see thee pollute her lips with a kiss, then in that moment will I strike the blow, and send thee from thy earthly bliss to thy hellish torments. Where is there now a happier being on earth than I, Alfred Arnfeld? my last, my dearest wish is on the eve of being realized. Thanks be for ever to that destiny, which guided me to the spot where the welcome information was received. I now feel as if a new life were infused into me; my whole frame has regained its wonted vigour. I feel as if a giant's strength nerved my arm; and that were a world to come against me, I should hold it but as baby's play, and in my desperation, sacrifice all human life as a thing not worthy of a thought."

It was in this dangerous and deceptive mood, that, in turning an angle of the street, Arnfeld came suddenly upon Fitzallan: to the latter the meeting was the consummation of his wishes; and although Arnfeld had never heard a single whisper derogatory to the character of Fitzallan, yet, knowing him to be one of the associates of Monckton, he appeared as if he were particularly desirous to avoid him; but Fitzallan would not be repulsed, and he accosted Arnfeld with such a degree of respectful consideration, that he was induced to return the congratulation; and in as brief a manner as possible, and with the ut-

most delicacy to his feelings, Fitzallan disclosed to him his nocturnal adventure with his daughter, and the place of abode to which he had conducted her. The father's feelings burst forth at once ; he grasped the hand of Fitzallan ; and, whilst a tear dropped from his eyes, called him his benefactor, his preserver. Arnfeld determined at once to hasten to his daughter, and to bring her back to her parental home. Fitzallan, however, had not thought it prudent to make known to the afflicted father the circumstance of his daughter having given birth to a child, as it was a piece of information that he wished to impart to him by degrees, with the view of not arousing the exasperation of his passions too much, and which ultimately might close every avenue to the projected reconciliation. It was therefore finally agreed that Fitzallan should return to the cottage, and prepare Maria for the visit of her father, and in the mean time he determined by degrees to make known to Arnfeld the real situation of his daughter ; which, as it was an event that must have been daily expected by Arnfeld, he flattered himself that the disclosure might not be attended with any decisive injury to the future establishment of Maria in the future affections of her father. Little, however, did Fitzallan suspect that the calm which appeared to accompany the actions of Arnfeld was all hollow and deceptive ; there was in fact a storm raging within, which, like the dormant fire in Etna's womb, was soon to break forth, carrying devastation and ruin to every object within its reach, and against which not all the coolness, prudence, nor presence of mind of Fitzallan would

enable him to contend ; nor could he suspect, in the slightest degree, that every step which he took in the affair of Arnfeld, was to be seized upon as the instrument of alienating from him the affections of his beloved Amelia.

CHAPTER XIII.

The older we grow, the greater is our conviction, that his sacred majesty, CHANCE, governs three-fourths of this miserable world, and that those who fancy themselves to be the wisest, are the greatest fools of that species who walk on two legs without feathers, and to which we have the honour to belong.

Frederick, King of Prussia.

THE company were assembled at Mrs. Thurston's, and whilst the dowagers amused themselves with scandal and quadrille, the younger part of the assemblage were whispering soft nonsense in each other's ears, and playing off the amiable and the agreeable, with the hope of establishing themselves in the good graces of their chosen favourite. In one recess of the drawing-room sat Adeline Gordon and Monckton playing at piquet, and close to them sat Lady Amelia Fortescue and Sir Henry Montfort, the subject of their discourse, most probably, their approaching nuptials. The eye of Lady Amelia had for some reason or another been constantly directed to the entrance-door, in the hope that one individual would make his appearance; but one hour after another had elapsed, and still he came not. On a sudden her attention was intensely directed to the following conversation, which took place between

Adeline Gordon and Monckton, and every word of which was so spoken that it could be heard both by Lady Amelia and her companion.

"How comes it," asked Adeline, "that Fitzallan is not here to-night?"

"I make no doubt," said Monckton, "that he has an engagement of a more pleasant nature on hand.—My point is forty-four."

"Not good," said Adeline. "I congratulated myself with the pleasure of meeting him here to-night, as I intended to banter him on a little discovery which I made this morning."

"Some sly amour, I'll warrant for it," said Monckton; "these modest, demure-looking fellows are always the greatest rakes at heart.—Are three queens good?"

"No," answered Adeline, "I have three aces. To-morrow, if you will accompany me, I will conduct you to a snug pleasant little cottage, which our immaculate Fitzallan has selected as the abode of his beloved; a delightful snug retreat for a tender loving couple to bill and coo in."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Monckton; "rest assured the whole will turn out to be some scandalous report.—Is a quart major good?"

"Very good," answered Adeline; "but you will allow that we may believe what we have seen with our own eyes. I accidentally called at the cottage this morning to rest myself during my morning walk, and the good lady of the house was very communicative on the subject."

During this speech Adeline cast a look of triumph-

ant malice towards Lady Amelia, but she could not endure the penetrating glance, at the same time that an ashy paleness was spread over her lovely countenance, whilst she appeared wholly inattentive to the questions which Sir Henry put to her. Adeline saw that the arrows which she had shot had hit their mark; and, to increase the virulence of the wound, she continued, addressing herself to Monckton, "By the report which was given to me," said Adeline, "Fitzallan was nearly deferring her removal until certain consequences would have happened in the town, which could not have failed to have given full publicity to the whole affair."

"You do not mean to insinuate," said Monckton, "that the honour and character of Fitzallan are compromised in this business?"

"It would be very illiberal in me," said Adeline, "to condemn Fitzallan without a full and thorough investigation of all the circumstances of the case; but I will go so far as to say, that appearances are very much—very much against him indeed. In fact, it is my opinion, that he must take his leave of this town altogether, for I am certain he will not be received into the circles in which he has hitherto moved."

"Is not the cottage," asked Monckton, "situate about the fourth mile-stone on the road to N——?"

"On the right hand side of the road," answered Adeline; "and the name of the tenant of it is Gainsford. She showed me a book which Fitzallan had given her, for I saw his name written in it."

"I am therefore," said Monckton, "not in the

least surprised at his absence here to-night ; but in the course of to-morrow I'll see if I cannot obtain a view of this turtle dove, for which he has selected so snug a nest."

" And let me know the result of your visit," said Adeline, " and then he shall be so quizzed that he shall wish himself at the north pole."

Fainter and fainter grew the bloom on Lady Amelia's cheeks ; her lips lost their redness ; her bosom appeared to be agitated with feelings of the most painful nature. She attempted to rise, but falling back in her chair, fainted away.

The alarm of Lady Amelia's sudden illness spread throughout every quarter of the room, the most powerful restoratives were applied, and she was carried by her relatives into an adjoining room, where soon a flood of tears bursting forth, gave some relief to her agitated heart.

In the mean time Adeline and her dastardly compeer sat triumphing over their success. The poison which they had instilled had worked beyond their most sanguine expectations ; and, in anticipation, Adeline saw the breach effected between Lady Amelia and Fitzallan, which no after explanation on his part could amend. The effect, however, which her slanderous insinuations had produced upon Lady Amelia, gave her a full insight into the state of her Ladyship's heart towards Fitzallan ; and being now convinced that she really loved him, she determined to follow up the course of conduct which she had pursued, and thereby ultimately to estrange the lovers from each other for ever.

The cause of Lady Amelia's indisposition now became the general topic of conversation throughout the whole assembly; the antiquated dames looked back into the days of their own youth, and tried to recall to their recollection if any such circumstance had ever happened to themselves, and then, by an investigation of their own case they should be able to pounce at once upon the real cause, which had produced the sudden indisposition of Lady Amelia. Basta and ponto were for a while forgotten, and nothing but Lady Amelia engrossed the attention of the female sexagenarians. It was the heat of the room, said one; it was the tightness of her stays, said another; it was the attack of the cholera, said another; it was the presence of her intended husband, said another; it was the effect of indignation, said another; it was—the whole coterie broke up, and not one could tell what it really was.

Adeline and Monckton, however, having conferred together for some time, the latter was observed to approach the spot where Sir Henry Montfort was standing, and, taking him by the arm, they returned to the same seats on which Lady Amelia and Sir Henry had been sitting.

“You will pardon me, I hope,” said Monckton, “my dear Sir Henry, and I am sure I need not solicit the same indulgence for Miss Adeline Gordon, if we have, by any inadvertency, been the means of Lady Amelia Fortescue's illness.”

“I cannot discover,” said Sir Henry, “in what manner you could have caused, in the most remote degree, the illness of her Ladyship. I am certain

that I cannot recollect any thing in the conduct or conversation of either Miss Gordon or yourself that could in any way affect Lady Amelia, and consequently that any apology on your part is necessary ; independently of which, I can answer for myself as a gentleman, and also for Lady Amelia, that the subject of your conversation was in a certain degree unknown to both of us."

"May I be allowed to differ with you on that point," said Monckton ; "I have reason to believe that the individual of whom we were speaking has had the presumption to aspire to the affections of Lady Amelia ; and if I may judge by what my own eyes have witnessed, he has not been altogether unsuccessful."

"Sir," said Sir Henry, in rather a peremptory tone, "you know the relation in which I stand with Lady Amelia ; I have therefore to desire that you dismiss all further insinuation and inuendo from your conversation, and proceed to the facts themselves. Have you any thing to say against the virtue or character of Lady Amelia ?"

"God forbid !" exclaimed Monckton, "and I am excessively hurt that you should put such a construction upon any of my words ; her character is, like Cæsar's wife, far above any suspicion ; and I assure you I never attributed the circumstance to any collusion or premeditated design on their part ; but I considered it as one of those events of mere chance, that I saw Lady Amelia, Miss Manners, and Mr. Fitzallan, sitting on the trunk of a tree in close and confidential conversation with each other."

“When, and where, Mr. Monckton,” asked Sir Henry, in a state of great excitement, “did that happen?”

Monckton here explained to Sir Henry the exact place and time in which he had discovered the ladies and Fitzallan; and he concluded by saying, “But do be composed, Sir Henry; I have reason to believe, from some subsequent inquiries that I have made, that an attachment has arisen between Miss Manners and Mr. Fitzallan; and that, as that lady is the intimate and confidential friend of Lady Amelia, she has shown a very anxious disposition to promote the views of the lovers.”

“Then, Mr. Monckton,” said Sir Henry, “how can the attachment of Miss Manners and Mr. Fitzallan have any reference to the sudden illness of Lady Amelia?”

“In the most natural way in the world,” answered Monckton; “and I certainly do take upon myself, after mature reflection, no little degree of blame in having introduced the subject of our conversation, when it was more than probable that it would be overheard by Lady Amelia. But I am certain you will acquit me, as well as Miss Gordon, of any wilful intention to hurt the feelings of Lady Amelia.”

“But,” said Sir Henry, “you have not yet explained to me how the feelings of Lady Amelia could be in any degree wounded by any act of Mr. Fitzallan, who cannot but be wholly indifferent to her.”

“Do you suppose, Sir Henry,” said Monckton, “that Lady Amelia can be wholly indifferent to the

situation in which her bosom friend would be thrown by the discovery of such a criminal act of infidelity on the part of her lover? Must she not feel in the acutest manner the destruction of the hopes of her friend in the discovery that her professed lover was carrying on an illicit amour with another? We confess that it was inadvertent; and I will go further, and confess that we are open to censure, knowing, as we naturally must do, the sincere affection which subsists between Lady Amelia and Miss Manners, to have so far forgotten what was due to the feelings of the former, as in her hearing to have touched upon any subject, which, from the interest which she takes in the happiness of her friend, must necessarily have given her considerable pain, and which we fear was so overpowering to her feelings as to cause her illness. It is on this account, Sir Henry, that we have to apologize to you for the distress, which our thoughtless conversation has occasioned to Lady Amelia."

Sir Henry listened to this most artful explanation on the part of Monckton with the utmost attention. The Baronet was what is generally termed a good-natured man, that is, his dominie had succeeded to whip into him just such a sufficiency of knowledge as to enable him so to guide himself, as not to break his head against every post or pillar that he might meet with in his way, and nature had just bestowed upon him as much mother wit as to teach him to make a proper distinction between a horse chestnut and a chestnut horse; but when he came in contact with such deep designing heads as those of Monckton or Adeline Gordon, he was certain of being made

the dupe ; and it appeared to him so very natural that Miss Manners might be in love with Mr. Fitzallan, and Mr. Fitzallan with Miss Manners, and it further appeared to him so natural that the feelings of Lady Amelia should be acutely wounded on the discovery of such a gross act of infidelity on the part of the lover of her friend, that he was disposed to believe that the illness of her Ladyship did actually proceed from the cause advanced by Monckton ; and he undertook to say that he would be the bearer of this declaration to Lady Amelia, of their extreme regret in having so innocently and thoughtlessly been the cause of disturbing the harmony of the company, and particularly of her much lamented indisposition. Monckton secretly congratulated himself for the generalship which he had displayed in extricating himself from the dilemma into which he was likely to be thrown by his unguarded and precipitate conduct, but at the same time, he secretly rejoiced at the impression which the relation of Fitzallan's supposed infidelity had made upon Lady Amelia, for he could not suppose, circumstanced as she was, that she would be able to institute any inquiry into the truth or falsity of the allegations against Fitzallan ; he therefore considered that his plans had been crowned with success, and he looked forward to the precious reward which he was to receive from the lips of Adeline Gordon.

Lady Amelia had no sooner reached her home, than, pleading extreme lassitude, she retired to her bed-chamber, in which she no sooner found herself alone, than she burst into tears ; the poisonous words

of Adeline Gordon still rang in her ears; she recalled to her recollection the look of triumphant malice which was cast upon her by Adeline, and she could not but see that her sole aim and that of her companion were to humiliate her, and to expose her in the presence of him, whom the world considered as her destined husband. She felt her pride mortified, that they had so completely succeeded in their aim; and more than all, her vexation was boundless, that, having lost all control over her feelings, she had so unequivocally exposed the state of her heart to two individuals, from whom it would have been her most anxious desire to keep it concealed, and who she well knew would take every advantage of it to promote their own unprincipled and dishonourable plans.

But then when she thought of Fitzallan, for whom every pulsation of her heart beat with the purest love, and for whom she was prepared to sacrifice rank, title, riches, and all the advantages of her exalted station, to share with him the comparative privations of his plebeian state; when she now thought that he in secret loved another, whilst his every word and action declared an ardent attachment for herself; when she thought that he was now lost to her, and that she must henceforth eradicate his memory from her heart, as of one who had only lived in it in imagination; then she wished that she could fly to some deep solitude, where no human eye could see her sorrows, where no human hand could administer relief. But why arose that beam of sparkling light on a sudden in her eye? why on a sudden came a roseate tint on her cheek? why on a sudden was

calmed the wild emotion of her bosom?—It was the inspiration of hope, that bland and benignant spirit which infuses such a sweet balsam into the bitter chalice of human life ; it was one of her all-powerful, never-to-be-forgotten whisperings, which, like a drop of rain to the parched mouth of the wanderer of the desert, breathe into the soul fresh life, and bounding spirits ; existence begins again ; a ray of light falls upon the darkness of the future, and a grateful orison ascends to heaven for the precious boon that it has bestowed. Fitzallan might still be found innocent of the charge imputed to him ; he might still be found to be good and virtuous : this cheering thought made the beam of sparkling light arise in her eye, the roseate tint to embellish her cheek, to give to her bosom its wonted rest. But then, when she looked to this possible scene of returning happiness, from another quarter arose a dark and destructive tempest, threatening to overwhelm “ with one fell swoop,” the entire edifice of her sublunary bliss. In those dear and precious moments of life, when the heart yields itself up to the vivid glowings of a fertile imagination, Lady Amelia had painted to herself in all the enjoyment of youthful enthusiasm, a rapturous future by the side of her beloved Fitzallan. In a lonely sequestered spot she built, in the exuberance of her fancy, a cottage for herself and him, overgrown with the ivy and the honeysuckle, and in the midst of a garden in which their simple fare was to be cultivated by their own hands. The serenest heaven smiled over this abode of peace, and love with an everlasting brightness seemed to hallow it. Nature spread before them the

richest of her creations, and happiness and calm content were the lot of the joyous inmates. It is the property of youth to live in a world of its own formation, but then that very ideal world is apt to make us discontented with the real one in which we are constrained to live. In the latter, events seldom happen as we wish they should do, or as our hopes have led us to expect. In it, no love blooms without its attendant thorns ; no breath of evening passes over the flowers in which some sighs are not intermingled. There was a time when we were wont to believe that memory poured its healing balsam only on that heart which is wounded by the present—but experience has taught us that we were in error. With those joys that have been tasted, and which memory pictures to us again, is associated the painful remembrance of all that we have long lost, all that we have long loved. Every tear that we have shed starts again into the eye. Every sigh that agitated the breast again intrudes itself to be the disturber of our present happiness. Memory indeed throws a lenient veil over the scenes of our sorrows, and of our departed joys ; but it takes away only the first acuteness, not that slow consuming bitterness, which is always the attendant upon real grief. But, nevertheless, in those blissful moments when we dream ourselves into ideal worlds, we forget the sufferings of the real one, and then every wish which is silent in the turmoil of social life, becomes in retirement active and efficient ; the mind then in emotion feels itself gifted with the power to accomplish its desires, even though after all it be but—a dream.

The foregoing remarks are given as an apology for those exuberances of a romantic fancy which Lady Amelia may perhaps exhibit in the peopling of her ideal worlds, and on the throne of which sat always one chief and prominent figure, the sovereign of her heart, the idol of her vows. But who can describe those feelings of the heart when in the moment of the completion of the fairy edifice, from some unexpected quarter comes forth the thunderbolt winged with destruction, and like the frost-work of an April morning, when touched by the beams of the sun, it is dissolved into thin air, and no vestige left to tell its former being?

Lady Amelia was born in that sphere of life, wherein the affections of the heart are seldom consulted, but where nature points out with an authoritative tone, that they, and they alone, should constitute the basis of the choice. Family pride, fortune, and convenience, had destined her to be the bride of Sir Henry Montfort, and any other person but Sir Henry would have blessed the gods that he was destined to be the possessor of such an angel. But Sir Henry was one of those cold, phlegmatic, calculating souls, who act more by mechanical rules than by the influence of the passions, and even in the affairs of love, that is, if his cold and frigid heart was ever vivified by its heavenly inspirations, he regulated his actions by a formal system of rules which he had laid down for himself, and which had as much affinity with the ardent effusions of a life-blood passion, as the great orb of day has with an iceberg. It was in some respects well for Lady Amelia, that these dispositions

were inherent in her destined husband, for had he been one of those fiery ardent spirits, who knowing that a treasure (and is not every lovely woman a treasure?) is within his grasp, rushes madly to the goal to take possession of it, Lady Amelia would not have been the heroine of this story, but she would have been led as a victim to the altar, to be the bride, perhaps, of a man she hated. In the course of the conversation which Sir Henry had held with Lady Amelia at Mrs. Thurston's rout, he informed her, that he had on that morning had an interview with her father, respecting the day that was to be appointed for their nuptials, expressing, at the same time, his sincere desire to suit the convenience of all parties, but that, as far as he was concerned, it was his wish that the marriage should be consummated before the shooting season began; there are, no doubt, many girls, who would have ventured to inquire of their intended husband, what particular connexion could subsist between their marriage and the shooting season; and it may be hinted, that if Lady Amelia had put the question to Sir Henry, he would have found some difficulty in answering it. However, it was in perfect keeping with his character, and the answer that Sir Henry received from the father of Lady Amelia consisted in the brief remark, that as there were only the wishes and convenience of two individuals to consult on so momentous a question; namely, those of the bride and the bridegroom, therefore, that the latter had in fact nothing more to do than to consult the former as to the appointed day, to which all the subordinate parties would of course give their

consent. Armed with this explanation, Sir Henry took the opportunity of his *tête-à-tête* with Lady Amelia at Mrs. Thurston's rout, to enter upon the subject, assuring her, by way of an exordium, or a kind of elegant peroration to the subject, that he had been long convinced of the truth of the axiom, that if a thing is to be done, the sooner it is done the better. Lady Amelia could not possibly dissent to the truth of so self-evident a proposition; but in her own mind she entertained a great aversion from the thing being done at all; consequently, the longer it was deferred, the more consonant would it be with her own wishes and desires. There were also several other very cogent reasons which Sir Henry advanced in favour of the immediate consummation of the nuptials; he considered the season of the year particularly auspicious, it being the month of May, when the pheasants and partridges would hatch, but Lady Amelia wondered what the hatching of the pheasants and partridges had to do with her marriage. The state of the stocks was also a matter of serious importance, inasmuch as a heavy loss might be occasioned were the marriage not to be contracted about the time when the dividends are paying, therefore, without making any further mention of the shooting season, no doubt whatever can exist, that the very cogent and forcible reasons adduced by Sir Henry for the speedy consummation of the nuptials, would, if they had been addressed to any female whatsoever, have at once determined her to fix the earliest possible day for the performance of the ceremony. On a comparative view, therefore, of the question, it

remains a doubt whether Lady Amelia would not have yielded to the force of Sir Henry's arguments, had not her attention been so exclusively rivetted to the slanderous misrepresentations of Adeline Gordon and Monckton, as to drive Sir Henry and her marriage with him entirely out of her head, and finally to bring about that catastrophe, which obliged Sir Henry to defer any further exposition of his arguments until a more fitting opportunity.

In regard to Lady Amelia, however, the conversation which she had held with Sir Henry had afflicted her heart with the most poignant feelings. She saw the storm which was shortly to burst over her; she saw the abyss on the brink of which she was standing, and from which it appeared to her that no human power could relieve her. Sir Henry was a man whom few women could really love; and the woman who could love him, must be one of those cold milk-and-water, secondary characters, whose love has as much fire and passion in it, as the love of a female oyster for the male. At the period, however, when Lady Amelia, at the instigation of her father, had consented to become the bride of Sir Henry, the fire of heaven had not descended upon her; her heart had not been vivified by that power of the divinity which gave life and motion to matter, and by which the throne of God is itself upheld. But now all things had to her assumed a different aspect; a new world had opened itself upon her; scenes of dazzling brightness spread themselves around her; the forms of nature stood before her manifest in their beauty; she could now explain to herself the great cause from

which the happiness of created life originated; and were all these bright prospects, these enchanting scenes to be closed upon her for ever for this world? was she to renounce that happiness which she saw diffused around her, merely to satisfy the empty punctilios of family pride and rank? But how could she recede? How retract the promise which she had given, and which she was now called upon to fix the day for its fulfilment? The day that beheld that fulfilment, beheld the death of her terrestrial happiness; but then, if the report were true, she had fixed her affections upon an unworthy object; upon one who loved another; upon one who was clandestinely engaged in an intrigue reflecting dishonour upon himself, and shame upon the object of his illicit passion. Thus bewildered, perplexed, and lost in a labyrinth, from which she could discover no clue to extricate her, she dreaded to encounter the presence of her father, fearing that he might urge her to fix the day for her nuptials, and thereby bid a long, a last farewell to all the scenes of her promised happiness, and to the eternal renunciation of him, who stood the foremost in those scenes, and without whom every thing would appear a dull and heartless void.

CHAPTER XIV.

She looked back on her father's door,
Her eyes were dimmed with tears ;
It was the home whence she had turned
Away in other years.
She thought of him who lured her thence,
His promises unkept ;
And the neglected wanderer
Sank on the stone and wept.

UNCONSCIOUS of the deep machinations which were secretly employed to ruin him for ever in the good opinion of Lady Amelia, Fitzallan pursued his course of active humanity, rejoicing in the prospect which lay before him of being the instrument of effecting a reconciliation between Arnfeld and his daughter. He had apprized the latter of the intended visit of her parent, and the hour was now come when Fitzallan was to call upon him to accompany him to the cottage. To his great regret, however, he found Arnfeld in a very different disposition of mind than at their last parting ; the effect of the discovery that he had gained a clue by which Monckton was to fall within his power had subsided, and all the native impetuosity of his character again burst forth, spurning every species of control, and apparently bent on only one object—the satisfaction of his revenge. Every argu-

ment that Fitzallan could adduce to persuade him to alter his resolution was at first rejected as if it were an insult to his wounded feelings, and a direct attack upon his honour. "When the blood of the seducer is spilt," said Arnfeld, "then I shall consider her, as it were, in some degree so purified from her shame, that I may take her to my arms again."

"May I ask you one question," said Fitzallan, "has Lord Dufresne, the father of her seducer, ever been applied to, to oblige his son to make the proper redress for his villainous conduct?"

"It is with the son, and not with the father that I have to do," said Arnfeld, surlily.

"I have reason to believe," said Fitzallan, "that Lord Dufresne, is a highly honourable man."

"Can he give my daughter back her virtue?" asked Arnfeld, interrupting him.

"Certainly not," replied Fitzallan, "but he can compel his son to act with that justice, which the case so imperatively demands. Will you allow me to act as the intercessor with him, and until his answer be received, allow me to recommend to you not by any premeditated action to give further publicity to the business."

"Go preach to the beasts of the forest," said Arnfeld, "to forego their rage, when they find that the hunters have robbed them of their young; tell them to lick the hand that has shed their blood. Young man, thou knowest not what feelings of the heart those are, when a doting and affectionate father sees an only child, his sole stay and comfort in his declining years, a victim to another's lust. When he sees

her prostrate at his feet suing for forgiveness for the villain, who by his hellish arts has hurled her from a state of comparative happiness to one of shame, misery, and disgrace. My Maria scarcely knew what a tear was, until the damned serpent wound his treacherous coils around her, and you would preach to me of mercy, forbearance, and forgiveness !”

“ I call upon you for neither,” said Fitzallan, “ until the injury which you have sustained has been redressed ; but add not to the already severe distress in which your daughter is overwhelmed, by any act of violence, which may make you subject to the laws of your country.”

“ Did she think of me when she rushed into the arms of her seducer ?” asked Arnfeld. “ Why then should I think of her ? why should I consult her feelings, when she never consulted mine ?”

“ It becomes not me, a stripling,” said Fitzallan, “ to dictate to age the mode of conduct it should pursue ; but let me, I conjure you, be the bearer of the consoling message to your daughter, that until the answer be received from Lord Dufresne, you will take up your residence in my house, where all your comforts shall be attended to, and where, in the society of a most revered and amiable friend, your resentment may be gradually softened, and your lips be brought at last to pronounce the blessed word of forgiveness.”

“ Young man,” said Arnfeld, taking Fitzallan by the hand, “ your nature and dispositions appear to be of a higher order than what falls to the lot of the majority of youth. To contend against my fate,

is to fight against a power to which I know I must eventually succumb. I feel, as it were, dragged forwards by some invisible hand ; I see the wide yawning gulf open to receive me ; but onwards, onwards I press, and not until my life be quenched in everlasting night, shall my course be stayed. But go, young man ; be the bearer of this ring to my daughter ; it was given to me by her now sainted mother on her death-bed. Tell my daughter it is given to her on mine ; and she—she my destroyer ; but tell her also—tell her—her father will not die cursing her.”

“ And am I to depart,” said Fitzallan, “ without one beam of consolation to shed over the deep gloom of her misery ?”

“ Yes, tell her—tell her,” said Arnfeld, in a tone of voice slow and solemn, “ tell her I am invited to the masquerade at General Hamilton’s, and on the following day, or perhaps on that very night, I will take her again into my arms. Now, go, go.”

Fitzallan pondered on the last words of Arnfeld ; there was a mystery in them which he could not solve ; there was a dark meaning in them which he dare not trust himself with the thought of, but that they had some reference to some dreadful plan which he had in agitation, required no extraordinary acuteness to discover. He felt himself in a state of awful difficulty ; and, from the peculiar delicacy of the case, he knew not how far he was justified in interfering. He determined, however, to consult Mr. Bode on the question ; and, taking a friendly leave of Arnfeld, he directed his steps to the cottage of Mrs. Gainsford.

One of the first acts which Lady Amelia performed on leaving her bed-room in the morning after Mrs. Thurston's rout was to send a message to her friend Julia Manners, requesting her immediate presence, as some circumstances had transpired, in the elucidation of which her talents and ingenuity were to be employed. Julia hesitated not a moment to obey the summons, and the two confidential friends were no sooner closeted, than Lady Amelia imparted to Julia the whole of the slanderous narrative of Adeline and Monckton, and Fitzallan found in Julia a warm and determined advocate. Still, however, she could not but confess that appearances were much against him, for it could not be supposed that the whole of the narrative had been fabricated for the mere purpose of satisfying the malignant disposition of the inventors of it. It was therefore determined, that under the pretence of paying some visits in the town, they should extend their walk to the cottage where the object of Fitzallan's love was represented to reside, and from their own personal observation arrive at once at the truth or falsity of the allegations against him. The two ladies were fully equipped for their trip of discovery, when, to their great mortification, Sir Henry Montfort was announced.

Perhaps no visitor could have been more unwelcome to Lady Amelia at this juncture than the Baronet; and to crown the disappointment, he was one of those trifling, tiresome creatures, who having no business whatever of their own to transact, think themselves entitled to tease and annoy all those who are otherwise circumstanced; and considering the

relation in which he stood with the Glencoe family, as the intended husband of Lady Amelia, he very often domiciliated himself in the house during the whole of the day, helping the ladies to wind their silks and thread, or forming loving words with pins on the top of the pincushion, or other such notable doings, with which certain effeminates employ their leisure hours. He also fancied himself a good reader, and he often *obleged* the female part of the family by reading to them the Court Circular, or other such vapid publications, in which the people of this most enlightened nation are supposed to be edified by the information of the exact time when royalty and nobility are pleased to walk, to eat, to ride, and to sleep; to which information as much real value is attached by the said people as to the calving of Giles Dobbin's cow, or the farrowing of Dame Durden's sow; but having been once rather puzzled by that little imp of mischief, Julia Manners, to instruct her in the difference between the Earl of Munster and a Munster Earl, and also to describe to her the geographical situation of some of the towns mentioned under the head of the Foreign Department, he in future carefully abstained from touching upon any other part of the paper than that which conveyed the important intelligence of all the *motions* of the royal family and their dependents, for which the British community at large would not pay one farthing.

Whilst, however, the two anxious girls were plotting in their heads some stratagem to get rid of the unwelcome intruder, to their great surprise, Sir Henry invited them to take a stroll with him in the

garden, as he had something of importance to communicate to them.

Lady Amelia turned as pale as a lily, for she doubted not that the something, which Sir Henry had to impart to her, had some reference to the scene of the preceding night; and she dreaded that some further information might have been transmitted to him, and that the sole purport of his morning visit was to communicate it as one of the most interesting topics of the day. Willingly, however, would she have refused compliance with the invitation of Sir Henry, but she feared he might enter upon the subject in the presence of her mother, and then, if she could not control her feelings, the maternal eye might discover the state of her heart, and from that moment put an end to all further intercourse with Fitzallan. Taking therefore Julia by the arm, they proceeded to the garden, when Sir Henry, addressing himself to Julia, said, "It is on your account, Miss Manners, that I have solicited this private conference, for I was last night made acquainted with some circumstances that very materially concern your welfare, and which, were I to withhold from you, might induce you to accuse me of not being your friend."

Julia and Lady Amelia looked at each other with eyes of wonder and astonishment; the latter, however, felt herself somewhat relieved, for she knew well that her friend would be able to extricate herself from any charge that might be brought against her; and as to herself, she feared nothing but a commentary upon, or an appendix to the infidelity of Fitzallan, which she suspected Sir Henry might have

picked up amongst the antiquated gossips of the day.

“ Indeed, Sir Henry,” said Julia, “ I feel myself highly honoured by this mark of your attention towards me ; but,” she added, with the knowledge which she possessed of the frivolous character of Sir Henry, “ I suppose your information has some reference to the loss of the bow from my bonnet, which unfortunately befell me yesterday.”

“ No, Miss Manners,” said Sir Henry, “ my information is of a much more serious nature ; and I assure you it grieves me much, that you, as the most intimate friend of my dear Amelia, should have thrown away your affections on so great a profligate.”

“ How ! what ! Sir Henry,” exclaimed Julia ; “ I throw my affections away on a profligate ! Really your information, I will acknowledge, is both serious and curious.”

“ But not less serious and curious than true,” said Sir Henry ; “ and you cannot conceive how much I was hurt, when I was informed that the illness of Lady Amelia last night was entirely owing to her extreme sympathy for the pain that you would endure on the discovery of the infidelity of your lover.”

Julia looked at Lady Amelia in the fullest amaze ; she was completely confounded as to what answer she should make ; for she was convinced that Sir Henry had been either imposed upon with some vamped up story, for the purpose of making a fool of him, or that he had himself put a false construction upon some reports which he had heard, and, in the

simplicity of his disposition, had hastened to communicate them in the proper quarter.

“Pray may I inquire,” asked Lady Amelia, “to whom you are indebted for the information, that my illness was occasioned by the sympathy which I felt for my friend?”

“O, certainly,” said Sir Henry. “You were no sooner conveyed out of the room than Mr. Monckton accosted me, and began to apologize to me, on the ground, that he much feared that the conversation in which he had been engaged with Miss Gordon was, in a great degree, the cause of Lady Amelia’s illness.”

A trembling now came over Lady Amelia, for she dreaded the remainder of the narrative; she was, however, relieved for the moment from her embarrassment by the playful manner in which Julia accosted the Baronet, urging him by all means not to keep her longer in suspense, but to proceed to the infidelity of her lover at once.

“I am surprised, Miss Manners,” said Sir Henry, that you can treat the matter so jocosely; but I should not deem myself worthy of being called your friend, if I did not warn you against Mr. Fitzallan, to whom I regret to hear that you are attached, and on whom Mr. Monckton insinuated, that even you, Lady Amelia, had bestowed your affections; but that was an insinuation which I was able personally to repel, from the endearing situation in which we stand towards each other. But only think, Miss Manners, what a vile faithless lover that Fitzallan has proved himself to be.”

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Julia, who could scarcely refrain from laughing aloud at the blunder which the Baronet had made, "I will never have any thing more to do with him; I will discard him as my lover for ever, but I cannot help crying"—taking the handkerchief from her reticule—"a faithless fellow. And are you sure, Sir Henry, that all that you have heard is true?"

"It is all true, you may depend upon it," said Sir Henry; "I could, if I had time this morning, conduct you to the very cottage where his beloved resides."

"Oh! I shall faint," exclaimed Julia; "my dear Lady Amelia support me."

"Run, run, my dear Sir Henry," exclaimed Lady Amelia, "for some water, and some hartshorn, and the bottle of sal volatile; run, run, my dear Sir Henry."

Sir Henry waited not for a second bidding, but scampered off towards the house with the utmost speed.

"Oh, my dear Julia," said Lady Amelia, as soon as Sir Henry was gone, "how can I ever repay you for this proof of your kindness?"

"I am afraid I shall betray myself with laughing," said Julia; "but the tragedy, which we feared, is over, and it is right that it should be succeeded by a farce. Keep up your spirits, and all will yet be well."

"Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Amelia, "I only now begin to breathe again; the agitation which I have suffered for the last ten minutes threatened

every moment to overpower me. Oh ! what a weight is taken off my heart."

" See, see," exclaimed Julia, " Sir Henry is returning ; haste and meet him, and tell him I am recovered."

Lady Amelia followed the instructions of Julia, and she hastened to meet Sir Henry, who had several of the domestics in his train, bearing all kinds of restoratives ; but Lady Amelia bade them return to the house, for that the indisposition of Miss Manners was merely momentary, and Sir Henry declared he was heartily glad to hear of her recovery, but at the same time, he could not but regret that her feelings should have received so severe a shock. " I am certain, however," said he, " that she must be very thankful to me for the warning I have given her ; for suppose, my dear Lady Amelia, that I should behave to you as that Fitzallan has behaved to your friend, what would you say to me ?"

" I might not survive the shock, Sir Henry," answered Lady Amelia.

" I do not think you would indeed," said Sir Henry, most piteously.

They now reached the spot where Julia was reclining against a tree, and she immediately expressed her sincere obligations to Sir Henry for the warm interest he had taken in her welfare. " But," she added, " I have one most especial favour to ask of you ; and that is, that neither in the presence of myself nor of Lady Amelia, you will ever mention again the name of Fitzallan. To me, you know well, the very sound must be painful ; and to Lady Amelia,

who sympathizes so deeply in all my sufferings, the mention of the name must, I am certain, be attended with emotions which I will not pretend to describe ; you had a specimen of the intensity of her feelings last night, and I am sure that you would not wish to see a repetition of the scene."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Sir Henry : "but forget your faithless deceiver altogether ; treat him with contempt, as I shall do whenever I meet him."

"I will, I will," exclaimed Julia ; "but it is painful to me to carry on this conversation any further ; my spirits are unable to sustain the contest ; allow me now to retire with my friend, to whom I can unburden all my griefs, and from whose generous sympathy I shall derive that consolation, of which I now stand so much in need. Oh, Sir Henry, if you hear of me drowning myself, or poisoning myself, or hanging myself, or shooting myself, or stabbing myself, or smothering myself between two feather beds ; then on Fitzallan's head let all your vengeance be hurled ; but it is too terrible to think of."

"Indeed it is, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry ; "but let me advise you not to attempt your life ; he is not worthy of your killing yourself for him ; but I perceive you are much agitated."

"Greatly so indeed, Sir Henry," said Julia.

"I will therefore now take my leave," said Sir Henry. "Adieu, my dear Lady Amelia ; you shall never find a Fitzallan in me."

"I have always heard you praised," said Julia, "for speaking the truth ; and I can confidently assert, from the knowledge which I possess of you, that

you never spoke a greater truth than that which you have just now uttered."

"I thank you much for the compliment, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry, "and I hope you will always find that I shall act on every occasion towards you, as I have done on the present one."

"It would be folly in me," said Julia, "to expect from you any line of conduct different from that which you have just now pursued. Adieu!"

"Adieu!" cried Sir Henry; and kissing his hand to the ladies, bent his steps towards the house, inflated with no mean opinion of the able and talented manner in which he had accomplished his task. That he had exalted himself several degrees in the good opinion of Lady Amelia was with him a matter of which it would be heresy to doubt; that he had established himself for ever in the high estimation of Julia Manners, and that he was, in his own conceit, richly deserving of being considered by her as her deliverer and preserver, were two points, on which it would be as difficult to convince him to the contrary as to persuade a lawyer that he is not a rogue, or a bishop that he is not fond of pelf.

Notwithstanding, however, the apparent levity with which Lady Amelia and her faithful friend had treated the information given to them by Sir Henry, yet they were no sooner alone, than, regarding the matter in its proper point of view, it was at once evident to both of them, that Lady Amelia had every thing to dread from the reports that were in circulation respecting her, and the machinations of those individuals, who had so basely conspired to ruin her

character and her fame. One point had, however, been gained, and it was one of no minor importance; which was, that they knew the quarter from which the conspiracy emanated; and no doubt now rested on the minds of both Lady Amelia and Julia, that the story as related by Adeline to Monckton, was fabricated for the sole purpose of ascertaining the effect which their slander would have upon her feelings, and thereby forming their estimate, as a clue to their future proceedings, of the existence of any actual attachment between Lady Amelia and Fitzallan. In what manner, however, Julia had become implicated in an amour with Fitzallan was an enigma which neither of them could solve; and yet Sir Henry had explicitly declared that the information was received from Monckton, but that person could have no ostensible motive in involving Julia in his implication, and therefore she was strongly inclined to consider the report of Sir Henry as some gross blunder on his part, in the commission of which he was well known to be a great proficient.

With highly lacerated feelings the two friends bent their steps towards the cottage. Lady Amelia felt almost as if she were hastening to the decision of her fate; for on the establishment of the guilt or innocence of Fitzallan depended her future happiness. And yet there was one question which she hardly dared to put to herself. She had never yet made a declaration of her love to Fitzallan; what right had she then to monopolize his affections? he had never ventured to express his love for her in any other way than in that mute expressive language, which cannot

be misunderstood. Their station, their condition in life was different ; could Fitzallan ever hope that the parents of Lady Amelia Fortescue would give their consent to a matrimonial alliance with an individual of no pretensions whatever? endowed with no rank nor fortune ; his mother living in a state of impenetrable mystery, and his father reported to be living, but from some extraordinary cause unwilling to declare himself to be his parent. Independently of all which, was it not well known to Fitzallan that Lady Amelia was in reality betrothed to another, and that, perhaps, ere a month had elapsed, she might be a bride, and himself then the victim to an unlawful passion. These circumstances were all well known to Fitzallan ; then, as many insuperable objections existed to Lady Amelia ever becoming his wife, why should the restriction be imposed upon him that he should not love another, or that if he did love another, why should it be imputed to him as an act of deception or a want of principle, seeing that the individual whom he could and would have loved was placed in such circumstances, that any attempt or expectation of a matrimonial alliance between them would have been rejected as an act of the most barefaced presumption, and have exposed the aspiring youth to the laughter and ridicule of all the immediate connexions of the lady to whose hand he aspired.

To say that Lady Amelia argued the matter in her own mind according to those principles, would be in fact saying a great deal too much ; but the question is, considering that she was under the influence of a

passion which equalizes all ranks, dignities, and titles, which exalts the peasant to a prince, and brings down the prince to the peasant, whether she stopped to argue the matter at all, and whether, in the exuberance of her imagination, she did not see every difficulty overcome, every disparity of rank and condition annulled, and herself the loving and beloved wife of a humble plebeian.

Nevertheless one thing is certain; which is, that the two friends on their way to the cottage, occupied their minds with one all-engrossing topic. Fitzallan was the sole theme of their conversation, and should his delinquency be detected, the resolution was formed to break off all further connexion with him; to treat him with contempt, with scorn, and to disavow him even as an acquaintance. Our experience, however, in the world tells us, that it is a resolution which many a girl has made before under similar circumstances and that the resolution was kept most religiously until the very first opportunity presented itself of infringing it

They were now in sight of the cottage, and a council was held as to the conduct they should pursue. It was determined that the most rigid caution should be observed; for if detection were to ensue, and particularly by certain individuals, the most injurious constructions might be put upon their actions, which malice and jealousy could devise; their reputation also might receive a stab, the consequences of which might follow them through the remainder of their lives. They now took a distant survey of the cottage; not an individual appeared to be moving about

it, and as far as the distance would allow them to judge, the house appeared to be so closely shut, as if a recent death had happened in it.

Irresolute whether to approach the cottage or not, they stood under the friendly shelter of some oaks, when they were startled with the sound of footsteps behind them; and on looking round, to their inexpressible mortification and confusion, they beheld Sir Henry Montfort. "Oh dear! oh dear!" exclaimed the Baronet; "how I have run. I declare I am quite out of breath; but I am glad I have overtaken you; but I'll tell you all about it—don't think I mean to intrude upon you. I thought you might want my assistance, and therefore I have hurried after you; for you must know, my dear Lady Amelia, that I mentioned to your father the unlucky scrape into which your friend, Miss Manners, had fallen with that worthless fellow, Fitzallan, and he suspected immediately that you might have directed your walk to the cottage, in order to ascertain the truth of the story which Mr. Monckton related to me, he therefore recommended that I should postpone the important business which I had then immediately on hand, which was the purchase of a greyhound of Lord Rivers's breed, and hasten after you, to render you any assistance which the occasion may require."

This long explanation on the part of the officious Baronet gave the ladies some little time to recover themselves from the confusion into which the sudden and very unexpected appearance of Sir Henry had thrown them; but they both felt severely the difficulty of their situation, and a secret dread operated on both their

minds, that if they persevered in the original intent of their walk, such circumstances might transpire, as would fully expose to Sir Henry the error into which he had been led, of the supposed attachment subsisting between Julia and Fitzallan, and by the discovery of the real truth frustrate the whole of their future plans.

“ Well, ladies,” continued the Baronet, “ we will, if you please, now proceed to the cottage, which there stands by the road side ; and I can assure you, Miss Manners, you shall find in me a most formidable champion to defend your character and your happiness.”

Julia now perceiving that unless she summoned all the energy and fortitude which she possessed to her aid, the cause of her friend might be injured and lost for ever, proceeded resolutely to address the Baronet.

“ Sir Henry,” she said, “ I beg leave to offer you my thanks for the interest you take in my behalf, but in a matter of this kind my feelings tell me to decline your interference altogether.”

“ Decline my interference !” repeated the Baronet, hastily ; “ Oh, Miss Manners ! how can you act so foolishly ? how can you be so blind to the danger which awaits you ?”

“ Of that, Sir Henry,” said Julia, “ I must be allowed to be the best judge.”

“ You cannot possibly be a judge—I mean an impartial one,” said Sir Henry, “ in an affair of this kind ; you are blinded by affection, and therefore you stand in need of a sincere, disinterested friend.”

“ But,” said Julia, “ I may surely be allowed the privilege of choosing the individual who is to be that disinterested friend : and you will permit me to say, that I know the difference between a sincere friend and an officious intruder.”

“ You cannot possibly, Miss Manners,” said Sir Henry, “ attach the latter character to me ! What would my dear Lady Amelia say to me, if I did not stand forward as the champion of her friend ?”

“ Indeed, Sir Henry,” said Lady Amelia, “ as it appears to be the wish of my friend that you should not interfere in this business, I must confess that the best way in which you can show your regard for me, is to desist from all further meddling in the affair.”

“ Pooh ! pooh ! my dear Lady Amelia,” exclaimed Sir Henry, “ that very speech convinces me that Miss Manners never stood more in need of a defender of her character and happiness than at the present moment. When I shall know the bliss of calling you Lady Montfort, would you not be inclined at some future moments of our life, to upbraid me with pusillanimity, with a want of all attention to the interests of your dearest friend, with a neglect of my duty as a man, and ignorance of the conduct and manners of a gentleman, if I allowed her to be maltreated by a worthless, unprincipled fellow, and I hesitated for a moment to step forward as her champion ?”

“ As to the defence of my character,” said Julia, “ I must positively desire, Sir Henry, that you leave that to my own care and preservation ; and even, supposing that I required a champion to defend it, I will be so candid as to avow, that you are not exactly

the individual whom I would select to fill that situation. In regard to my happiness, I allow that you have it in your power to contribute to it in a most essential manner."

"Did I not tell you so, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry, rudely interrupting her; "I knew you would be obliged at last to confess that your happiness depends upon me."

"I acknowledge it," said Julia, "to the fullest spirit of the letter; I should utter a falsehood were I to deny it, and I will now tell you in what manner you can most essentially contribute to my happiness."

"Speak, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry, bristling up with a high degree of self-importance.

"I need not inform you, Sir Henry," said Julia, "of the present agonized state of my feelings."

"Ah!" said Sir Henry, "it is indeed a sad business."

"And under those circumstances," said Julia, "the greatest happiness which you, Sir Henry, can confer upon me, is to return immediately from whence you came, and leave me solely to the condolence and consolation of my dearest friend."

"What! leave you in your present state, Miss Manners!" ejaculated Sir Henry, "impossible!—No, no. I am well aware that you may look upon my present interference as intrusive and officious, but the time will come when you will thank me for it. Now let us proceed towards the cottage."

"Never," exclaimed Julia, in the most emphatic manner, "shall it be said that I ever sought for or

sanctioned your interference in any affairs of mine ; I disclaim on your part, all right so to do, either by solicitation, intimacy, or consanguinity. I denounce your conduct to be both ungentlemanlike and unhandsome in persevering to intrude yourself into the affairs of an individual, who is comparatively a total stranger to you, and from whose company you ought to have retired, as soon as you had been made acquainted that your presence was disagreeable."

" I can make every allowance," said Sir Henry, " for the warmth, Miss Manners, in which you have expressed yourself, but you and I view things through very opposite media. The affection which you may still entertain for Fitzallan, notwithstanding his alleged infidelity, may naturally prompt you to extenuate his fault, and to shield him from the consequences of an open and disreputable discovery. But I—how differently is it situated with me? I view the whole of the affair through the cool and dispassionate medium of truth and propriety. I am not warped by any prejudices of affection—you have sustained an injury, a deep, irretrievable injury, and therefore redress must be had."

" For Heaven's sake," said Lady Amelia, " desist at present, Sir Henry, from all further importunity. I cannot endure to see the feelings of my friend so harassed by your pertinacious conduct, and, therefore, to put an end to the business, we will all return home together."

" And not investigate the affair at the cottage?" exclaimed Sir Henry. " No, no, Miss Manners, you

shall never complain that I did not obtain you redress," and with these words he ran off towards the cottage with the utmost speed.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Lady Amelia, throwing her arms around the neck of Julia, "Oh! how shall I be able to endure this trying scene? Oh! if Fitzallan should be there—if he should bring him hither—Oh! how can I receive him—how shall I be able to keep such a control over my feelings as not to expose my weakness, not only to Fitzallan, but to Sir Henry Montfort? Oh! Julia, into what a dilemma have I brought myself?"

"Summon all your courage, my dear Amelia," said Julia, "and what is more, summon all your pride; if Fitzallan be at the cottage, and he presumes to appear before you, show him by your behaviour—show him by a high and dignified demeanour, that you consider him unworthy of you—that you resent his perfidious conduct, and by a display of silent contempt, make him feel his own disgrace, and the irreparable loss which he has sustained."

"Oh!" said Lady Amelia, "and if it should be so—if it should be proved that Fitzallan is there living with one, who is dearer to his heart than myself, if it should be determined that I must renounce him for ever, forego every prospect of future happiness, which my romantic fancy has painted for me in the most captivating colours, if henceforth I may never pronounce his name but as of a person dead to me in this world—then, my dearest Julia, talk not to me of stoicism, of pride, of resentment, but weep for me—for misery is my future lot."

They now saw Sir Henry open the little gate which led into the garden in front of the cottage, and in a few moments he was seen knocking at the door. At this moment, the intensity of Lady Amelia's feelings was almost past endurance. Had she stood at the entrance of some haunted cave, from which she expected every moment some horrid spectre to emerge, her heart could not have palpitated more irregularly; nor, when the door of the cottage was opened, could she have strained her vision more intensely, to catch a glimpse of every object which presented itself, particularly of any form bearing any resemblance to Fitzallan. On the opening of the door, a female was seen to present herself, who having apparently listened to the message delivered by Sir Henry, retired within, and in a short time—oh! what were now the feelings of Lady Amelia—Fitzallan presented himself.—“Oh! heavens!” she exclaimed, “it is then all too true—Fitzallan loves another—and I—I am rejected;” a flood of tears came to her relief, or she would have fallen senseless in the arms of Julia.

“Come, come, my dear Amelia,” said Julia, “do not yet despair. I own that appearances are much against him; let us wait awhile; let us hear what Sir Henry has to report to us, who, although I shall ever hate him for his impertinent officiousness, may yet, contrary to our own ideas, be conducive to the elucidation of the apparently mysterious, and, I must confess, dishonourable conduct of Fitzallan.”

“Oh! my dear Julia,” said Lady Amelia, “say not a word in his defence; would that I had never known him, or, knowing him, that I had never loved him.”

"Seat yourself for a short time on this tree," said Julia, "until the flurry of your spirits has subsided, and we will then trace our steps homewards."

"Oh! let not Sir Henry see me in this state," said Lady Amelia, "for I will now hesitate no longer to fulfil the wishes of my father; I will give my hand in marriage to Sir Henry, so careless am I now of what becomes of me. The happiness of this world is closed upon me; and now, Julia, lead me to my home, once my happy one, now how sad and cheerless!"

Slowly they bent their retiring steps; but ever and anon Lady Amelia turned her head, and took another look at the humble dwelling, of which she would have thought it the bliss of her life to be the inmate, if another, of whose name now she must forget the sound, shared its solitude with her. She saw Sir Henry and Fitzallan still standing in the garden in the front of the cottage—another step—and it was her last look—perhaps the last on earth of him she loved; she laid her head on Julia's shoulder, and burst into tears.

Whilst the two affectionate friends were thus communing, the following extraordinary scene took place between Sir Henry and Fitzallan. If the latter expressed his surprise at seeing Sir Henry Montfort so most unexpectedly, when he was aware no personal interest of his own could call him, how much the more was he confounded, when Sir Henry informed him, that ascertaining he should find him at the cottage, he had taken upon himself the office of calling

to request some explanation from him in regard to his conduct towards Miss Manners.

"I declare, Sir Henry," said Fitzallan, "my total ignorance to what part of my conduct you allude, for I am not aware that I ever in the slightest degree, either in word, deed, or action, so committed myself as to give offence to Miss Manners, a young lady for whom I entertain the highest sentiments of respect and esteem."

"And I have reason to believe, Mr. Fitzallan," said Sir Henry, "that you have given her good cause to flatter herself that you entertain sentiments towards her of a still more tender nature."

Fitzallan actually stared at Sir Henry, overcome with surprise and wonder. "I beg," said he at last, "that you will explain yourself more distinctly on this subject, Sir Henry; and you'll excuse my candour when I tell you, that I allow no one to impute dishonourable or unprincipled conduct to me, without calling upon him for his proof or his authority."

"Mr. Fitzallan," said Sir Henry, "you cannot expect from me a more valid proof, nor a better authenticated authority, than the lady herself."

"Miss Manners herself!" repeated Fitzallan,—
"Oh! it is impossible; you have assuredly been made the dupe of some artful, designing person, and as I know, Sir Henry, that it is a peculiar trait in your character to interfere in the affairs of others, seldom with their consent, and often without their knowledge, you will allow me to suspect, that this is a very striking proof of the exercise of that disposition."

“By no means—by no means,” ejaculated Sir Henry, triumphantly; “I have interfered in this business with the full knowledge of Miss Manners, and further, with the entire concurrence of, and at the express recommendation of the father of my dearly beloved Lady Amelia Fortescue; to whom, perhaps I need not inform you, I am going to be married in a few days.”

“At the recommendation of the father of Lady Amelia Fortescue,” muttered Fitzallan to himself, and bent his look in deep reflection to the ground. Sir Henry construed this conduct of Fitzallan into a tacit admission of his guilt. “And can you be surprised, Mr. Fitzallan,” he said, “that when the report was conveyed to Miss Manners, whose affections I fear you have too well succeeded in obtaining, that you were living with a lady under this roof, whom you loved better than herself, and for whom you have deserted her, that she fainted away in the arms of Lady Amelia, and was only brought to herself by the powerful restoratives which I administered to her?”

“Further—further”—exclaimed Fitzallan, whose countenance expressed the conflict of the most violent passions—“I am prepared to hear all you have to say; but I now warn you, say not a word for which you cannot bring forth your proof, strong as of holy writ, for I swear some blood shall flow for this. Tell me, Sir Henry, and I insist upon a categorical answer, by whom are you deputed to instigate this investigation into my conduct, and to bring charges against me, which are as black and false as the heart in which they were engendered?”

“ Your presence in this cottage,” said Sir Henry, “ is confirmatory of the charge against you, of your culpable and unprincipled desertion of Miss Manners, and of your secret amour with another.”

“ Who is the individual,” exclaimed Fitzallan, “ who dares accuse Hector Fitzallan of a culpable and unprincipled action ? Your authority, Sir Henry, or from this moment I shall hold you to be the author of the calumny, and treat you accordingly.”

“ I have it from the lips of Miss Manners herself,” said Sir Henry, “ that your infidelity towards her was a base and unprincipled act ; and you know not half the pain which you have occasioned her, for when the subject of your conduct towards Miss Manners was the subject of conversation at Mrs. Thurston’s rout, it accidentally came to the ears of Lady Amelia, my dearly beloved intended wife, and so keenly did her susceptible and sympathizing heart feel for her affectionate and confidential friend, that she fainted away in my arms.”

For some moments the utterance of Fitzallan was choked ; his ideas became confused ; he had heard enough from Sir Henry to lead him to believe that he was ruined for ever in the estimation of Lady Amelia Fortescue, and he strongly suspected that the tale of his attachment to Miss Manners had been invented by his enemies, to estrange those individuals from him, in whose good opinion he had hitherto stood so highly. Still, however, he was borne up by the consciousness of his own innocence and integrity, and arousing himself from the confusion into which the information of Sir Henry had plunged him, he

said, " I have no means, Sir Henry, under my present circumstances, of immediately ascertaining the motive which has induced you to take upon yourself the character of a champion in this business. I cannot consider that personal friendship or regard for me has had the slightest weight in determining the line of conduct which you have thought proper to adopt, and, therefore, I can only consider you as the instrument of some designing person to effect some particular purpose, in which virtue and integrity have, perhaps, very little participation."

" I can assure you, Mr. Fitzallan," said Sir Henry, " that I am not actuated by any other motive than a desire to see the injury redressed which the chosen friend of my dearly beloved Amelia has received from your hands ; and if you doubt my asseveration on that head, you have it in your power to convince yourself of the truth or falsity of it in a very few minutes, as Lady Amelia and Miss Manners are both awaiting my return in yonder wood."

" What do I hear !" exclaimed Fitzallan. " And have Lady Amelia and Miss Manners condescended so far as to become the hidden spies upon my actions, and to depute you as their agent, to collect every idle tale which calumny or malice may have engendered to rob me of my fair fame, and alienate from me the hearts of those whose friendship and good opinion I prize too highly, not to consider the loss of them as one of the greatest calamities which could befall me ?"

" I am not come hither," said Sir Henry, " to canvass the question with you as to whom is or is

not your friend, but I will so far exonerate Lady Amelia and Miss Manners from the charge which you have brought against them, as to avow that the latter in particular peremptorily enjoined me not to seek a personal interview with you here, but to leave the defence and justification of her character entirely to herself."

"And Lady Amelia," asked Fitzallan—"what were her dispositions?"

"Of course," answered Sir Henry, "she coincided in the wishes of her friend. But considering the near relation in which I stand towards her—and the still nearer in which I shall soon stand—I considered myself called upon most imperiously to assume the character of their champion, and I have no doubt they regard me as the most valuable friend they possess."

"Of that I will convince myself and you too in a very few minutes," said Fitzallan. "I will immediately see the ladies, and I have no doubt I shall be able to exonerate myself in the most satisfactory manner from any charge which they may have to allege against me."

"The ladies," said Sir Henry, "are for the time being under my protection, and I shall consider any intrusion upon their privacy, or any personal annoyance given to them, as an insult given to myself."

"I am convinced," said Fitzallan, "that I know the character and manners of a gentleman too well, to intrude myself unnecessarily or wantonly on the privacy of any lady, much less to offer to her any personal annoyance, and as to the construction which

you may think proper to put upon my actions, in reference to yourself, I beg you to observe, that under existing circumstances, I shall not pay the slightest attention to it."

"Mr. Fitzallan," said Sir Henry, "I consider myself entitled to dictate to Lady Amelia with whom she shall hold any intercourse, and consequently, as affairs now stand, I shall interdict her from associating with any one without my previous knowledge and consent."

"My character, Sir Henry," said Fitzallan, "is of greater consequence to me, than your interdiction, or your displeasure, and were not your insignificance in a great degree your protection, I would let you know, this very moment, that you cannot pass an insult upon me with impunity. Now, Sir Henry, if you please, follow me to the ladies;" and thus saying, he set off at a rapid pace towards the wood.

On their way thither, Sir Henry mounted his stilts of self-importance, and in the full spirit of aristocratic pomposity, declared that it was a matter of the greatest condescension in him to have thus interfered with a plebeian in a case of mere personal character; but Fitzallan kept a very strong check upon his indignation, determining on the very first opportunity that presented itself, to give the Baronet that chastisement which he so richly deserved.

Lady Amelia and Julia were walking slowly homewards, conversing confidentially on the manner in which they were to deport themselves towards Fitzallan, at the same time that in their hearts arose the most bitter hatred against Sir Henry for his offi-

cious and impertinent interference in the business, when, on a sudden, Julia looking behind her, beheld Fitzallan approaching them with hasty strides, followed by Sir Henry, who appeared more than anxious to keep up with his companion, and at times attempting to overtake him.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Julia, "keep yourself collected, my dear Amelia, Fitzallan and Sir Henry are but a short distance behind us."

"Oh, gracious powers!" exclaimed Lady Amelia, "how shall I endure the interview!"

"Follow my advice," said Julia; "shun at present all explanation; let us behave towards him with every mark of the most indignant displeasure; treat him with the pride of offended dignity; and although it may give to the mean and petty mind of Sir Henry the satisfaction of a temporary triumph, it will be the certain means of allaying in his mind any suspicions of the real state of your heart towards Fitzallan."

"I fear," said Lady Amelia, "that I shall not be able to keep a sufficient control over my feelings; it is impossible for the heart of woman to undergo a severer trial than to find that the object of its love is unworthy of it."

"I have a presentiment within me," said Julia, "that we shall find Fitzallan guiltless of the charge against him. But, hush! they are now close behind us;" and in a moment afterwards, Sir Henry was heard vociferating, "Lady Amelia! Lady Amelia! Miss Manners! Miss Manners!"

The ladies turned round, and Fitzallan stood before them, his cheeks reddened with the glow of

honest indignation; and there was in his whole demeanour that display of manly pride, which is always the concomitant of conscious integrity and undeviating rectitude of conduct. He bowed in the most formal manner to Lady Amelia, and afterwards to Julia, and his salutation was returned with the most repellent stiffness, and with the full exhibition of a deep lurking indignation.

“I must apologize to you, ladies,” said Fitzallan, “for thus intruding myself into your society, but having been informed by your deputy and champion, Sir Henry Montfort, that I have been guilty of a gross dereliction of honour and principle, particularly towards you, Miss Manners, I have, consistently with that regard which is due to my own character, forced myself, perhaps thus impertinently, into your society, to solicit from you some explanation of that part of my conduct which appears so particularly to have drawn upon me your displeasure and resentment.”

“Mr. Fitzallan,” said Sir Henry, “I am the individual who is prepared to give you every explanation which you may require.”

“Sir Henry,” said Fitzallan, “unless it appear to be the particular desire of the ladies, I shall, on the present occasion, not condescend to receive any explanation from you.”

“What!” exclaimed Sir Henry; “not when you must look upon me as Miss Manners’s chosen defender and champion?”

“Not chosen by Miss Manners,” said Julia, archly.

“But,” said Sir Henry, “as the defender of the

character of the most intimate friend of my dear Lady Amelia, whom in a few days I shall have the happiness of calling my bride, I consider myself as the most proper person to give and receive any explanation of the actions or conduct of any individual, who, by his gross departure from honour and principle, may have robbed you of your future happiness."

During this speech of Sir Henry's, the looks of Lady Amelia and Fitzallan met each other. There was an expression in that of the former, which the latter could not misinterpret, and which shot daggers to his heart; there was in it all the spirit of a wounded love beaming through a tear which trembled on the eyelid, but there was in it also that eloquent language so peculiar to the female eye, when it would tell that there is a rankling grief within, which pains the more because it dare not be disclosed.

"Allow me to say, Sir Henry," said Julia, "that as I am in this instance the aggrieved person, I do not consider this to be either the time or place for an explanation; and that in regard to the office which you now appear to fill, it is one entirely assumed on your part, and, as far as myself is concerned, wholly contrary to my wishes."

Sir Henry felt himself deeply humiliated by this exposition on the part of Julia; and addressing himself to Lady Amelia, he said, "Whatever ingratitude I may experience from Miss Manners for my generous and disinterested conduct in her behalf, I know that I shall receive from you those tokens of your love and affection, which you have hitherto so profusely bestowed upon me. I shall therefore take

you under my immediate protection; and I only regret, considering the circumstances under which Miss Manners stands in regard to Mr. Fitzallan, that she has exhibited so much perverseness as to reject my friendly interference in her behalf."

During this dialogue between Sir Henry and Julia, Fitzallan stood as a mute auditor, his heart tortured with the idea of the inestimable treasure he was in a few days to lose, and that perhaps his eyes were then resting for the last time upon the idol of his love, ere at the altar she had pledged her love and obedience to another, and consequently to him dead for ever. As to the baseless imputation which had been thrown upon his character, he considered it as scarcely worthy of a single thought; a few minutes of confidential intercourse with either Lady Amelia or Julia would, he was well convinced, obliterate from their minds every evil impression which the malignity of others might have raised against him; but, when he looked upon Lady Amelia—upon that individual with whom every thought of his soul was entwined, and in whose love was concentrated all the bliss of his future life, then he felt himself in the world as some lonely isolated being; for life is a desert without love; and he seemed at the moment when he was about to part from her, as taking the last farewell of all that was dear to him on the earth, *never* to meet with it again. There is something in that word *never* at which the affectionate heart revolts; so long as hope animates the breast with the cheering thought, that the kiss which is given is not the *last*; then on the dreary path of life some blos-

soms still spring forth, and the weary wanderer plods his way, hoping ere long he may taste that kiss again. But *never* is a death in life ; and the heart that knows and feels it, is like a clouded heaven with not a star to lighten it ; a desert without a flower to deck it ; a night on which no morning ever breaks.

Julia now perceived by the tears which were trembling in the eyes of Lady Amelia, that if the interview were protracted much longer, she would be obliged to yield to the overpowering intensity of her feelings ; struggling as she then was between a firmly-rooted love, and the supposed unworthiness of the object on whom that love was bestowed ; addressing herself therefore to Fitzallan, she said, " There is no one, Mr. Fitzallan, to whom the justification of your conduct will be more agreeable, and I may add, more truly welcome, than to myself. This evening my mother and myself will keep ourselves disengaged, when, if you will grant us a few minutes of your company, I have reason to believe that our intimacy will be restored to its former footing."

" And I will make a point," said Sir Henry, " of attending at the same time."

" I shall in this case, Sir Henry," said Julia, " exercise the privilege which I possess of selecting my own company ; the business concerns me, not you, Sir Henry."

" What !" exclaimed Sir Henry, rudely interrupting her, " how can you declare that the business does not concern me ? Would it have proceeded thus far in its examination but for my interference ? have I not shown myself your most able defender and ad-

vocate? and then to tell me that the business does not concern me! I know that I am acting with the entire concurrence of Lady Amelia and her family; and I must say, that with your strong predilections and prejudices in favour of the delinquent, added to the excessive credulity of your disposition in all matters where your heart is concerned, you are the most unfit person that I know of to undertake, unassisted, the examination of the charge against Mr. Fitzallan."

"Not to protract this interview any longer," said Julia, "I consider myself so fully competent to investigate any charge against Mr. Fitzallan, as far as I am concerned," and in saying these words, she cast a most expressive look upon Fitzallan, "that I am resolved, Sir Henry, that you shall not be present."

"Now, Lady Amelia," said Sir Henry, "is it not your most anxious desire that I should undertake the cause of your friend?"

"Indeed, Sir Henry," answered Lady Amelia, "after the decided and unequivocal manner in which my friend has expressed herself, it would be assuming a privilege which I do not possess, to dictate to her in what manner she should act: I therefore decline all further interference in the business. I can only add, that it will give me pleasure to hear from the lips of my friend, that Mr. Fitzallan is worthy of being restored to that high station which he formerly held in her good opinion."

"Then Mr. Fitzallan," said Sir Henry, "we have at present no further occasion for your company;

you may return to your cottage, and to your beloved."

"Sir Henry," said Fitzallan, "the presence of these ladies imposes upon me, out of respect and delicacy for their feelings, a line of conduct which you may be apt to construe into pusillanimity and cowardice; but I assure you, plebeian as you may think me, and tainted as you may deem me with dishonour, you will find that no one yet ever insulted Hector Fitzallan with impunity. I shall return to the cottage, Sir Henry," he added with peculiar emphasis, "and further, I will tell you, that in so doing, I return to an amiable, virtuous, and beautiful female, whom it will be the happiness and pride of my life to protect; and who, as long as a drop of blood flows in my veins, shall never look abroad in the world, and say she is a friendless being."

"There—there!" ejaculated Sir Henry, in a triumphant tone, "there, Miss Manners; you have now the confession from his own lips: after that, talk no more of investigation, examination, and such useless stuff. Come, Lady Amelia," offering her his arm. "Miss Manners, will you not accompany us?"

"I shall certainly accompany my friend," said Julia; "but as to any other company, I would rather be without it."

Fitzallan bowed to the ladies in the most respectful manner; by Lady Amelia it was returned with the greatest formality, accompanied with a degree of disdain, which was too expressive to be assumed; and Fitzallan now began to fear, that in the heat of his indignation at the conduct of Sir Henry, he had been

too explicit regarding the fair inmate of the cottage, and consequently that Lady Amelia might have imbibed a prejudice against him, which no after explanation could remove. There were, however, a frankness and cordiality in the parting behaviour of Julia, which led him to augur that in her he would find a faithful and able advocate, and that she might ultimately prove the channel by which a reconciliation could be effected.

“I shall then have the pleasure of seeing you this evening, Mr. Fitzallan,” she said.

“I shall look forward to the hour with the most ardent longing, Miss Manners,” said Fitzallan; and, casting a most expressive look upon Lady Amelia, he added, “the truth will then be established of whom is the injured person.”

Sir Henry hurried Lady Amelia away, muttering some words as he retired, which it was well that Fitzallan did not hear, or the Baronet would have received some personal chastisement on the spot, which would have taught him that the arm of a plebeian possesses nerve and strength sufficient to punish the effeminate but haughty offspring of nobility, whenever the latter presuming on its fictitious superiority, thinks itself entitled to trample on its supposed inferior.

Fitzallan stood for some minutes and watched the retiring trio. It was not, however, the attack upon his character which gave him the slightest uneasiness, for that was an evil which he knew could soon be remedied, but the harrowing information had been imparted to him, that in a few days Lady Amelia was to be the bride of another. It therefore became

his duty, hard and severe as it might prove, to eradicate from his heart all remembrance of her ; to speak of her hereafter as some hallowed being, and from whose association he was to be henceforth excluded, as if there lay in his breath or touch some baneful contamination, some profanation of a holy saint.

In the delineation of the character of Fitzallan, we draw no "monster which the world ne'er saw," we make neither a devil nor an angel of him ; although virtue may and did predominate in his character, yet he was not without that portion of vice, which is more or less the heritage of every one of the sons of Adam, and we may add also, without giving offence, of all the daughters of Eve. That the conduct of Sir Henry Montfort was well calculated to exasperate Fitzallan cannot for a moment be questioned ; but when it is taken into the account, that that conduct was observed towards him by the individual who, in a few days, was to be the possessor of an object on whom every affection of his soul was fixed, and who, as having taught him what love is, had taught him also to know the greatest bliss of life ; then no wonder need be excited, that with the resentment which Fitzallan entertained towards Sir Henry for his ungracious and unjustifiable conduct were intermingled some of the darker passions of our nature ; and if hatred and uncharitableness ever dwelt in the bosom of Fitzallan, they were at this moment exercised towards Sir Henry Montfort in the fulness of their virulence. It was not the aspersions which he had thrown upon his character, it was not his presumptuous interference in a business which did not

in the least personally concern him, nor his proud and haughty demeanour towards him as an individual whom he considered to be far his inferior, that in the least excited the resentment or indignation of Fitzallan; but he had basely and insidiously attempted to ruin him in the good opinion of that being, who to him was every thing, and without whom life itself presented but a dreary blank. On that man therefore he determined to be revenged; and the means of satisfying that passion now engrossed the whole of his thoughts.

CHAPTER XV.

They placed her hand in his,
They bade her love him well ;
They heeded not the bitter tears
That on her pale cheek fell.
Her mother blamed her childish grief,
Her father frown'd with pride ;
Her lips were mute before their choice,
But she did not become his bride.

GLOOMY and discontented, his heart racked with various and conflicting emotions, Fitzallan arrived at the cottage. There, in her lonely chamber, with but one friend in the world, and that friend then suffering for his humanity and generosity, sat the daughter of Arnfeld, weeping over the corpse of her child. As Fitzallan entered the room, the transient smile of the grateful heart on beholding its benefactor came over her countenance, like the gleam of the sun through a watery cloud ; but the next moment the fleeting impression was gone, and the dark gloom of a settled grief betrayed the anguish of a breaking heart. Fitzallan took the hand of Maria, and seated himself at the foot of the couch on which the now lifeless infant was lying. He fixed his eyes on its inanimate form, and it was evident that some strange and mysterious feelings were working in his breast.

"Thou art happy," he said, "blessed infant, in thine unconsciousness ; it is to a feeling of himself and of his existence that man is indebted for his misery. Weep not, Maria ; but be thankful that thine infant is taken from the world before it knew what that world is : it was the hand of mercy and of goodness that cut its thread of life ; look not therefore upon that hand as thy chastiser, but as thy benefactor."

"A mother can only tell a mother's feelings," said Maria. "I looked upon that child as my only solace through life, as the living memento of him whom I once loved so dearly—and thus to lose it ! I thought I could already read in its lineaments the features of its father, and as such it would have been doubly dear to me."

"The prescience of heaven," said Fitzallan, "perhaps saw its future destiny, and in mercy took it to itself."

"In mercy, then," said Maria, "let it take me also ; for I shall envy my child its quiet in the grave. Oh, that we could be the tenants of the same, that we might sleep our last long sleep together, and our spirits rise in sainted union to plead for pardon for the seducer and the father."

"The ways of providence are inscrutable," said Fitzallan ; "you know not yet to what you are born ; much may be yet in store for you."

"Of deep and agonizing suffering, I can well believe," said Maria.

"Then," said Fitzallan, "would you have your child have shared that suffering with you ? Better is it that it is in its grave."

“But amidst that suffering,” said Maria, “it would have been a joy, a consolation to me; for I should have known that there was one being in the world who loved me.”

“And who, in after life,” said Fitzallan, “might have repaid your love with ingratitude and vice. An infant in the sleep of death is an emblem of purity and innocence; why then wish to see it live—to behold the beauteous image disfigured, to see every infant trait destroyed, a spectacle for devils to rejoice over. Weep not, Maria; thy child is saved, is blessed. Would that that infant’s fate had been mine”

“’Tis desolate to be in the world alone,” said Maria; “the being that has nothing to love, nor has a being to love it, is nature’s finished outcast; and who will deny me the title to that name—I *had* a father—Oh! but what anguish lies in that one word *had*?”

“Ask me not for my reasons now,” said Fitzallan, “but in the death of that child I see a brighter prospect opening upon you for the future. Look upon this house in the mean time as your asylum; console yourself with the thought that our good is often worked in secret, and that when we see ourselves, as it were, enveloped in the gloom of misery, on a sudden from some unexpected quarter bursts forth the light of happiness upon us, and we revel more proudly in the latter; from a remembrance of the sufferings of the former. To-morrow,” continued Fitzallan, taking Maria affectionately by the hand, “you shall see me again; in the mean time, the necessary

preparations shall be made for the interment of your infant. Rest assured, however, that I have very cogent reasons for the injunction which I am now going to impose upon you. Show yourself not to any one, who on any excuse whatever, plausible or frivolous, may call at the cottage. I shall leave the necessary instructions with Mrs. Gainsford, to whom I will give those candid reasons for my conduct that cannot in any degree compromise her character, nor cause any unpleasant suspicions in her mind. Now, farewell—place your confidence in heaven, and all may yet be well.”

Fitzallan took his leave of the afflicted daughter of Arnfeld, and after having been closeted for a few minutes with Mrs. Gainsford, he left the cottage to attend more immediately to his own affairs.

On the arrival of the ladies with their redoubtable champion at home, the Earl, in a jocose manner, inquired of the latter, how far he had succeeded in punishing the delinquent for the injury which he had inflicted on the heart of Miss Manners? to which Sir Henry replied, “that it was impossible but that Miss Manners must be highly satisfied with the manner in which he had combated her cause, inasmuch as he had finally brought the delinquent to the confession, that he was actually engaged in an amour with a beautiful female, and further, that his effrontery extended so far, as in the very presence of Miss Manners, to declare that he should immediately return to the cottage and to the society of his favoured fair one.”

“And pray, Miss Manners,” asked the Earl, who was no stranger to the weakness of Sir Henry’s cha-

racter, "in what manner did you receive the confession which the Baronet so ably extracted from your inconstant swain?"

Julia, who perceived that she was in reality fighting the battle of her friend, by encouraging the belief that an attachment did actually exist between Fitzallan and herself, put on a very doleful countenance, and expressed her hope that the Earl would not banter her on a subject so distressing to her feelings; but still she could not refrain expressing her regret, that her bold and courageous champion should have exposed himself to the animosity of Mr. Fitzallan, fearing that on her account the affair between them might terminate in a very serious manner.

"I beg, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry, "that you will dismiss from your mind all fear on my account. In your defence only, as the friend of my dear Lady Amelia, would I have condescended to have held any intercourse with Mr. Fitzallan; a person who, I am informed, knows not who his father was; for aught he knows, some travelling tinker, or some skipjack of a mountebank in a booth at a fair; and do you suppose that I, Sir Henry Montfort, the representative of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, and whose ancestors came to this country with William the Conqueror, having flourished in Normandy or Saxony, I forget which, for above a dozen centuries before, can you imagine for a moment, that I would so far degrade myself as to accept a challenge from such an obscure individual as Fitzallan? No, no, when I fight, it must be with my equal in every thing."

"Then I am certain," said Julia, "you will never fight at all, for in some things it would be a fruitless task to attempt to find your equal."

"True, true, Miss Manners," said Sir Henry, who wholly mistook the meaning of Julia's sarcastic remark; "I thank you much for the compliment which you have just now paid me. We men of rank are of a superior race of beings; and with the common people we stand in the scale of mankind, in the same degree of comparison as, in the animal tribe, the high-mettled racer and the clumsy and laborious cart-horse. Is not that your opinion, my Lord?"

"I trust," said the Earl, "that I possess too much liberality of sentiment to depreciate the character of an individual, merely because he is of plebeian birth."

"But, my Lord," said Sir Henry, "a man who does not know what his father was, and whose whole history appears to be so enveloped in mystery, that no person is able to solve it;—to stand opposite to such a man in the field of honour would be an everlasting stain upon the family of the Montforts, and never shall it be said that I was the first to disgrace the name."

"I must confess," said the Earl, "that until this moment I never heard even a whisper derogatory to the character of Mr. Fitzallan; on the contrary, I have myself often quoted him as an example to my two sons, and indeed to every rising young man of the age; and, as to the mystery respecting his father, on which you appear to lay so much stress, that does

not tend in the slightest degree to degrade him in my opinion; there may be very good and cogent reasons, unknown to any of us, for keeping his birth a secret, and in which we have no right to interfere."

"Pardon me, my Lord," said Sir Henry, "for interrupting you, but have I not a right to interfere in the affairs of those individuals into whose society I am likely to be thrown?"

"No greater right, Sir Henry," replied the Earl, "than they have to interfere with yours. I was, however, going to observe, when you interrupted me, that I have very good reason to believe that General Hamilton is privy to the peculiar circumstances under which Mr. Fitzallan is placed, and I have so high an opinion of the character and virtues of the General, that I am certain he would not take so warm an interest in every thing which concerns Mr. Fitzallan, nor be so anxious to introduce him into the very highest circles, if he were not thoroughly satisfied in his own mind that he was richly deserving of that marked attention, both in respect to rank, fortune, and character."

Lady Amelia could at this moment have thrown her arms around the neck of her father, and have almost stifled him with her kisses, for the warm and unexpected manner in which he had espoused the cause of Fitzallan against the overweening, supercilious, and haughty demeanour of the Baronet. Nor did the latter expect to hear such an eulogium of this upstart plebeian as had just escaped the lips of the Earl. "Ay, ay," said the Baronet, "this comes all of the march of intellect, and of reason, as it is

ridiculously styled ; we shall soon see all the disciples of that school breaking down the barriers which have hitherto so properly, and so profitably to the general interests of society, existed between aristocracy and democracy, and a man of rank and title will in a short time be no higher thought of than a Duke or a German Prince would be amongst the Chicksaws in North America."

"It has pleased heaven," said the Earl, "to place me in an exalted station in the great family of mankind ; but you never hear from my lips a single boast of that superiority which I have not acquired by any merit of my own. You may consider the sentiments which I am now going to utter as possessing great singularity, coming as they do from the lips of a nobleman ; but after all, what is a nobleman ? a man who is proud of his blood ; proud of his rank ; proud of his riches ; proud of his supposed merit. What is his birth ? that which nature has bestowed upon him. What is his rank ? that which fortune has given him. What are his riches ? that which he has received from his ancestors. And what his merit ? that which his own self-love or flattery gives him. Now, Sir Henry, nobleman as I am, you have heard my definition of that character."

"I will never copy it into my album," said Sir Henry ; "but I have reason to believe, my Lord, that you have not succeeded in instilling the same sentiments into the mind of my dear Lady Amelia."

"Word for word," exclaimed Lady Amelia ; "I can pardon folly, vanity, prejudice, and self-conceit, in the low, ignorant, and illiberal plebeian, but a

man of rank and title, whose actions do not accord with the station which he fills in life, who descends to puerilities, and to mean and despicable actions, is, in my estimation, one of the greatest nuisances of society."

"I agree with you, my dear Lady Amelia," said Sir Henry, "that such a character must be a great nuisance, and the sooner he were scouted from society the better."

"You have, Sir Henry, spoken some very excellent truths, to-day," said Julia, "but as the character which Lady Amelia has drawn cannot possibly apply to you, Sir Henry—"

"Apply to me!" exclaimed Sir Henry, "God forbid! my character stands far above any such imputation;" but, addressing himself to the Earl, he said, "I should wish my Lord to take your advice upon one point, which is, this evening an interview is to take place between Miss Manners and Fitzallan, explanatory of his late conduct, do you not think it proper and advisable that I should be present at the interview?"

"I have heard," said the Earl, "that a third person, in certain cases, is a very inconvenient kind of a personage, a sort of officious intruder; and I must confess, that I do not see any reason why Miss Manners and Mr. Fitzallan cannot settle their little *égaremens du cœur* without your interference."

"That is a conclusion," said Sir Henry, "to which your Lordship has arrived from an ignorance of the character of Mr. Fitzallan."

"I thought I informed you just now, Sir Henry,"

said the Earl, "that I had reason to believe that the character of Mr. Fitzallan was unimpeachable."

"So it may be in certain points," said Sir Henry, "but you surely will not exculpate him in regard to his conduct towards Miss Manners?"

"I cannot presume, Sir Henry," said the Earl, "to be a judge of that conduct of which I have no circumstantial evidence before me; at all events, as you have paid me the compliment to ask my advice, I will give it you with the utmost candour and good will. Considering that a very short time may see you related to my own family, you may most probably have some important matters of your own to arrange; direct, therefore, your attention to them, and let Miss Manners and Mr. Fitzallan settle their love quarrel in any manner most agreeable to themselves; and, rest assured, that the chances are a hundred to one in their favour, that, before they part, a complete reconciliation will ensue; whereas if you, like some modern Don Quixote, will thrust yourself into the broils of other persons, without either their authority or inclination, you will be stigmatized as a common Marplot, and be shunned as the disturber of the peace and happiness of your fellow-creatures."

It is impossible to say how long Sir Henry, from his obstinate and inflexible character, would have prolonged the conversation, had not a servant entered, informing Sir Henry that a gentleman *desired* to speak to him on very urgent business.

"*Desires* to speak to me!" repeated Sir Henry, "that is not a word to which I have been accustomed! Some

low, ignorant fellow, I suppose ; tell him, I will grant him an interview in a few minutes. *Desires* indeed ! I remember, my Lord," continued Sir Henry, " that when my late sister fell in love with Captain Cholmondely, she also was so obstinate and perverse as to refuse my interference ; the consequence of which was that he turned out a complete scoundrel to her, and she died of a broken heart."

" And do you suppose, Sir Henry," asked the Earl, " that your interference would have prevented him turning out a scoundrel, or saved your sister's heart from breaking ?"

" Most undoubtedly," answered Sir Henry, " my experience and foresight would have penetrated into his snares and stratagems, and I should have stood between my sister and her lover as an obstacle to the consummation of his plans. It is really deplorable that my advice and spontaneous assistance are so often rejected when it is too late : what a world of evil would have been saved had my interference been allowed."

Sir Henry had launched forth again upon his favourite topic, totally forgetting that a gentleman was waiting to speak to him, and it is probable that he would have continued to annoy the ladies with his empty rhodomontade for some time longer, had not the servant again entered, informing Sir Henry, that the business on which the gentleman had called did not admit of any further delay.

" God bless me !" ejaculated Sir Henry, " how remiss in me. Tell the gentleman I will attend upon him instantly."

Sir Henry was on the point of leaving the room, when Julia caught hold of him by the arm, and in a most sarcastic tone, said, "Do give me leave, Sir Henry, to interfere in the business which you have to transact with the gentleman, you cannot form an idea of the world of trouble it will save you."

"Interfere in my business!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "my dear Miss Manners how could such a *bizarre* idea enter your mind, that I was not capable of transacting my own business? I assure you I should consider it as an insult upon my good sense and general knowledge, were I to allow of the interference of any one in any affair of mine."

"If he be a friend of yours, Sir Henry," said the Earl, "I beg you will take him into the library, where, I promise, you shall be free from all personal interference."

"I shall not, perhaps, condescend," said Sir Henry, "to admit him further than the hall;" and puffed up with all the ventosity of his pride, he left the room.

"O! my dear father," said Lady Amelia, throwing her arms around the neck of her father, "save me from being sacrificed to such a contemptible being; the moment that I become his wife, the knell of my earthly happiness is rung."

"My beloved child," said the Earl, "I cannot but confess, that the character of Sir Henry has some very dark and repellent shades in it, but still he is not without his virtues; and when his fortune, the antiquity of his family, his expectation of becoming the heir to one of the first dukedoms in the kingdom are

considered, I cannot deny that it is one of the most eligible matches that could have presented itself for you."

"It is not, however, my dear father, all those advantages which you have enumerated, which can act as an equipoise to that disgust which I have imbibed for his general character. It may, and I believe it does generally happen, that love is not the basis of the majority of marriages in our sphere of life, but at all events there ought to be esteem. It is, however, impossible for me to feel even that sentiment for Sir Henry; and what happiness can be expected from that marriage which is based on neither esteem nor love?"

"You have had frequent opportunities before to-day, my dear Amelia," said the Earl, "of becoming acquainted with the character of Sir Henry, and it was never my wish to precipitate you into a marriage with an individual of whose character you did not possess some previous knowledge. I own, Sir Henry is not one of those shining prepossessing characters which achieve an immediate conquest over the female heart; but, barring a few foibles, (and where is the individual without them?) he possesses sterling merit, and under the guidance of an affectionate and indulgent wife, who would know how to check him in the ebullitions of those foibles, that comparative share of happiness might be enjoyed, which although it might not come up to the ideal of a sanguine and romantic expectation, yet on the whole, it might amount to that sum, which is the general lot of a human being."

"Is not," asked Lady Amelia, "some congeniality

of taste and disposition necessary to constitute a happy marriage?"

"I grant it is," answered the Earl, "but I do not consider it by any means an indispensable requisite; on the same principle that in harmonics concord is produced by discord, so I have known in the married state, that a positive degree of happiness has resulted from a contrariety of tastes and dispositions. In regard, however, to your marriage with Sir Henry, I regret much that you have suffered such a length of time to elapse before you discovered these objections to your union with Sir Henry, or that, having discovered them, you forbore to mention them to me. I see no possibility of our now retracting without a positive infraction of our honour."

"The day," said Lady Amelia, "that sees me the wife of Sir Henry Montfort, sees me the most miserable of human beings; I may be dragged to the altar, I may be made to promise in the face of heaven that which I can never perform, and I shall return to the splendour of rank and opulence with a heart breaking with despair and grief."

"Here are fine doings!" exclaimed Sir Henry, bursting into the room, "think only of the presumption of the fellow; that low, insignificant creature, that Fitzallan, has sent one of his coffee-house companions to me, of the name of Campbell, challenging me to meet him to-morrow morning to give him satisfaction for the numerous insults which the fool supposes that I have offered to him to-day—although, at the same time, he most graciously and condescendingly informs me, that he is ready to accept of any

apology, which one gentleman ought to make to another under similar circumstances. Apology! gentleman indeed!" ejaculated the enraged Baronet, "to call upon me,—me, Sir Henry Montfort, Baronet,—to make an apology to a low, obscure individual, who is only worthy to brush my coat or blacken my shoes. Was there ever any thing heard of half so preposterous? it is in reality downright laughable; a pauper to challenge a Baronet!"

"Allow me to say," said the Earl, as soon as the ebullitions of the Baronet had somewhat subsided, "that you appear to me to treat this affair with too much levity. My dear Amelia, and Miss Manners," addressing himself to them, "you will, perhaps, under the present circumstances, think it proper to retire; the subject on which I have now to converse with Sir Henry is not befitting the female ear, and as you cannot but look upon yourselves as the innocent cause of this untoward event, it is better that the affair should be settled in a private manner."

Lady Amelia and Julia immediately rose to leave the room, casting upon Sir Henry a most expressive look of contempt and scorn. Before, however, that Julia could reach the door, Sir Henry approached her, and taking her hand, implored her to stifle every alarm and apprehension, which might arise in her mind as to the result of the challenge of her lover, for he had formed the unalterable resolution of never placing himself on a par with an individual, whom he considered to be so much his inferior."

"I must have formed a mistaken notion of the character of Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia, "if you do

not ere long discover that he is far your superior ; at all events, let me advise you to get some one to interfere for you, or I suspect that the dignity of Sir Henry Montfort will, ere a few hours have passed over his head, be reduced to a very humbled condition."

"Humph!" ejaculated Sir Henry, as Julia closed the door; "I think Miss Manners is very personal in her remarks, and moreover, she is very ungrateful to me."

"Can you be surprised," said the Earl, "at the severity, which accompanies some of her remarks, when you reflect, that you have committed one of the most heinous sins which can be perpetrated towards a female, and especially to one who is in love. Have you not attempted to debase and degrade her lover in her estimation? and as to the discovery and disclosure of his infidelity, so far from thanking you for it, or testifying her gratitude for it, depend upon it, you may rely in future upon her most sovereign hatred; and as to her forgiveness, look not for it in this world;—but now to matters of greater import. In what manner do you intend to act in this affair of the challenge?"

"Can you doubt for a moment, my Lord," said Sir Henry, "as to the decision which I have formed on the subject?"

"I should conjecture," said the Earl, "that your decision would be to accept the challenge."

"Eh! what!" ejaculated the Baronet, "you are joking, my Lord; accept a challenge from a pauper, from an obscure individual, who, for aught I know, may be some runaway apprentice, or the bastard of a

nightman ! Would you have me so degrade my name and family ? would you have me so far lose sight of all the respect which I owe to myself, my connexions, and my friends ? No, no, my Lord, you are but joking on the subject."

" Indeed, Sir Henry, I am not by any means disposed to joke on a subject of so serious an import ; for although you may, in your own conceit, entertain the opinion which you have just now expressed of Fitzallan, I can assure you, from my own knowledge, that you stand almost single in that opinion ; and therefore the plea of the obscurity of his birth, or his pauperism, will not avail you any thing, nor justify you in the eyes of the world, for not accepting his challenge."

" Really, my Lord," said Sir Henry, " there are few points to which I would not pay the utmost deference to your judgment ; but in a matter of this sort, where my own personal feelings are to be consulted, I must be allowed to act according to the dictates of my own discretion ; and those dictates tell me, that I should consider myself degraded in my own estimation, were I to accept a challenge from an individual so far my inferior."

" It is on that point, Sir Henry," said the Earl, " that you and I are at issue. It is true that you are in possession of a title and of a princely fortune, neither of which it has pleased fate to bestow upon Mr. Fitzallan ; but you will excuse my candour, when I say that, setting those two advantages aside, I do not see in what respect Mr. Fitzallan is your inferior."

“What!” exclaimed Sir Henry; “meet a man as my equal, who, I believe, never saw his father’s coat of arms in his life.”

“He may, for all that,” said the Earl, “be an honourable, upright, and virtuous young man.”

“Virtuous, forsooth!” exclaimed Sir Henry; “do you call that virtue, my Lord, when a young man, by his winning arts, inveigles himself into the affections of a too credulous girl, and then leaves her to dally and toy with another? and besides, to boast of it also in the very presence of that female, whom he has so basely deceived!”

“We have as yet,” said the Earl, “only heard one version of this affair; and therefore my experience in life tells me, never to condemn an individual until I have heard what he has to say in extenuation of the charge that is brought against him. There is, however, one part of his conduct in this affair, which fully convinces me, that he possesses the feelings and principles of a gentleman—and that is, that in seeking redress for the insults that he may have received, he is not actuated by any mean spirit of revenge; for he declares himself disposed to accept of that apology which one gentleman has a right to expect from another on the commission of any personal offence.”

“I make an apology to my inferior!” exclaimed Sir Henry; “that would indeed be an act of too great condescension on my part.”

“As therefore,” said the Earl, “it appears that you will neither accept the challenge nor make an apology, it becomes me, considering the relation in which you may soon stand to me, as the husband of

my daughter, to interpose my interference to prevent a stain being thrown upon the honour of any individual connected with my family ; and under those peculiar circumstances, I think myself entitled to inform you, that your conduct in this business has not tended to exalt you in my good opinion. I shall therefore immediately despatch a messenger to Mr. Fitzallan, requesting him to favour me with an interview ; when I make no doubt I shall be able to bring this unpleasant business to an amicable termination."

" It is also my intention to write to the presumptuous fellow," said Sir Henry. " The upstart ! to think I should so far degrade myself as to accept his challenge. I suppose the march of intellect will soon teach the scavenger of the streets to challenge a man of rank."

" I'll tell you, Sir Henry, what the march of intellect will teach that scavenger to do ; which is, that whenever a man of rank unjustly, or without a cause, oppresses or injures him, to treat him exactly as an equal, and so to bespatter him with his mud that his friends should not be able to recognise him. In my opinion, Sir Henry, aristocracy has reached its height in this country, and merit and virtue will soon be the only criteria by which a man will be estimated."

" Impossible, impossible, my Lord !" exclaimed Sir Henry. " Rank forms one of the grades of human society ; it may be called the Corinthian pillar of it, and ruin will overtake the country whenever it is overthrown. But, for the present, my Lord, I will bid you adieu. Having despatched my answer to the

blusterer, I have an appointment with Miss Gordon, who has requested to see me on some particular business. Really it is surprising how my time is occupied with the affairs of other people; not that I by any means intrude myself upon their notice, but in all critical cases, I appear to be their sole refuge; and I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind, that if Miss Manners would have intrusted herself wholly to my discretion, she would have found ample reason to congratulate herself on the result. *Au revoir*, my Lord."

"When we meet again," said the Earl, "I hope I shall have agreeable information to communicate to you."

Sir Henry directed his steps towards the door, when a sudden thought appeared to dart across his mind, and turning sharply round, he said, "*Apropos*, my Lord; I believe you are personally acquainted with Major Arnfeld."

"I have known him many years," said the Earl; "and a braver or a more honourable man does not exist within the whole circle of my acquaintance."

"There are some very strange reports," said Sir Henry, "floating about the town respecting his daughter; it is, however, by no means my disposition to paint the devil blacker than he really is; but the finger of suspicion points strongly at that fellow, Fitzallan, being the cause of her ruin. It is really lamentable that no one will interfere in the business: but I suppose, as usual, the task will devolve upon me."

"Then," said the Earl, "I am certain, Sir Henry, that it will be entirely your own seeking; for from what I know of the parties, I consider them well able to settle their own affairs without the intervention of a third person."

"That is a conceit, my Lord," said Sir Henry, "which fills a number of heads; and it is the very reason that we see so much mortification and disappointment in the world. The rumours are of a very strange complexion respecting Arnfeld's daughter: and in the circle of the gossips it is reported, that she has been obliged to retire to some distant part of the country to bring forth an addition to the human species."

"And pray, Sir Henry," said the Earl, "may I ask you in what respect that addition concerns you? or what can it matter to you, whether there be a human being more or less in the world?"

"God bless me, my Lord!" ejaculated Sir Henry; "not concern me! is not every individual more or less concerned in the affairs of the world? and is not such an event to which I allude of such great importance, as to interest every one about it? why the whole history of the world is made up of such events; and the very first thing which we generally wish to know of an individual is, where he was born, and what was the condition of his parents, and particularly if he possesses the claim of ranking amongst the legitimates."

"True," said the Earl, who began to grow rather testy at the frivolous and empty remarks of the Baronet; "true, true, Sir Henry; that is one of the

reasons why the world in general is so ignorant and narrow-minded, because it busies itself with trifles, and leaves the solid and the useful to a select few. Show me the pursuits of a man, and I will show you the man himself. If Newton had busied himself about the trifling incident of the bringing forth of a human being, the power of gravity would perhaps never have been discovered; and if Watt had concerned himself whether the human being so brought forth had a right, in consequence of a few words muttered by a priest to its mother, to enjoy all the rights and blessings of legitimacy, the savage on the shores of the Mississippi and the Ganges would not have beheld a giant mass impelled by the power of a caldron of boiling water. But I thought you informed me, Sir Henry, that you had an appointment with Miss Gordon."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Sir Henry, "how very rude and remiss I shall appear to her. But, really my mind is so fertile on some subjects, that when I begin to discourse on them, some fresh light breaks upon me every moment, in which I am so absorbed, that all other matters escape my memory. But I will now take my leave;" and he proceeded towards the door. Turning, however, suddenly round, he said, "Should Miss Manners change her mind in regard to my being present at her interview this evening with Fitzallan, my services are still at her command. You will perhaps, my Lord, have the goodness to convey those sentiments to her."

"Undoubtedly," said the Earl.

"Not that I should condescend," said Sir Henry,

“to hold any conversation with him; therefore I mean, that I should be present as the advocate and defender of Miss Manners.”

“Exactly so,” said the Earl.

“For it is very difficult to say,” said Sir Henry, “what advantages might not be taken of her inexperience in the absence of a third person.”

“Very difficult indeed,” said the Earl.

“I have known several instances of that kind,” said Sir Henry, “happening within my knowledge.”

“I always considered your knowledge, Sir Henry,” said the Earl, “to be very extensive.—But Miss Gordon, Sir Henry.”

“Dear o’ me!” ejaculated the Baronet. “Adieu!”—and the Earl felt himself relieved from an intolerable nuisance, as soon as he saw the Baronet fairly out of the room; so short-sighted, however, are we human emmets, that Fitzallan little thought that his rencontre with Sir Henry Montfort that morning, and the immediate consequences resulting from it, particularly the interview between the Earl and the Baronet, should have led the former to the reflection—whether the marriage of his daughter with a man of the narrow and contracted mode of thinking of Sir Henry, and his mind imbued with the most inveterate prejudices, could possibly turn out to be a happy one. It was, however, productive of one good effect, inasmuch as it determined the Earl not to expedite the marriage, and in which resolution he was, in some degree, more confirmed by the resolute opposition which Lady Amelia had herself advanced towards the union. Reflecting, however, that the intended marriage of

his daughter was a matter of public notoriety, he considered that it would be good policy in him to prevent the names of either of them from becoming the subject of public conversation ; and therefore Sir Henry had no sooner taken his departure, than the Earl despatched a messenger to Fitzallan, soliciting as early an interview with him as was consistent with his convenience.

What, however, were the feelings of Lady Amelia when she heard that perhaps in a few hours, and for aught she knew, the very next, Fitzallan was to be under her father's roof, and at his own particular request and invitation ; but then the all-engrossing subject began to be discussed between her and her friend, as to the motive which could have induced the Earl, her father, to solicit an interview with an individual, with whom he was not connected in the most distant manner in any affair of business or of intimacy ; and, with the knowledge that they possessed of the prying, officious, and falsifying character of Sir Henry Montfort, they feared, that in the long *tête-à-tête* in which the Earl and the Baronet had been engaged, that the latter, actuated by the spirit of exaggeration, and his carelessness about truth where he wished to establish a point, might have so vituperated the character of Fitzallan, that the Earl himself might consider it necessary to espouse the cause of the Baronet, and to make himself a party in the quarrel which existed between them.

It must, however, be stated, that there was one person in the family of the Earl in whom the Baronet always found a staunch advocate and friend, and

who had always been an indefatigable promoter of the marriage between himself and Lady Amelia; and that person was the Countess herself. It was true indeed that her Ladyship was doubly armed in the affair; for she not only possessed the enviable advantage of noble blood, but by some means, which she was always at great pains to explain, but which few could understand, she, in her opinion, made it distinctly to appear, that the same kind of blood which ran in the veins of King Fergus the First of Scotland, was actually to be found current in her own; and although it was very impertinently suggested by some quibbling sceptics, that during the course of so many centuries, the Fergusian blood might have been so much adulterated, as to lose all affinity with the original fluid, yet she positively and resolutely maintained, that any such adulteration was contrary to the course of nature; and consequently, as the stock from which she sprang could, with all the truth of a Welsh genealogy, trace their descent from the said King Fergus, it followed, as a matter of course, that she stood, in the great menagery of the human species, as a kind of mongrel of royalty and nobility; and the discussions, deliberations, discourses, disputations, and dialogues, which were held between the Countess and the Baronet on the inestimable advantages, and the indisputable superiority, which a person combining royalty and nobility in his own person must, does, and will possess over the poor, plodding, pauper plebeian, ought to have been transmitted to the Heralds' College, to be incorporated with the ridiculous and unintelligible

mass of rubbish, which is sacredly preserved in that most useless of all our national establishments. A man of rank, who attaches no value to it, united to a woman, who attaches every value to it, must necessarily, on every supposed or positive infraction of her dignity, or a wanton departure from the punctilios enjoined upon him by her rank, expect to encounter all the violence, vehemence, and virulence, from his noble spouse, which a certain English Viscountess, bloated with aristocratical pride, is known to inflict on her pliant and docile Lord, whenever he condescends to acknowledge the salute of one of his tradesmen.

To the ascendancy, or, more properly speaking, to the dominion, which the Countess had succeeded in acquiring over her Lord ; and not only of acquiring but maintaining, is to be attributed the strong footing which Sir Henry still maintained in the Earl's family, and consequently the incessant endeavours, which were used by her Ladyship to consummate the marriage between her daughter and the Baronet ; for although his name still figured only in the Baronetage, there existed the most flattering prospects that it would, at some future period, be promoted to the peerage, and that her son-in-law would rank as one of the most ancient of the ducal species. And was this all-cheering, this exhilarating prospect to be looked over ? And even supposing that the embryo Duke bordered strongly on the fool, he carried with him the enviable satisfaction, that on his reception into the family of Dukes, he would not appear on that account, by any means as a solitary exception.

It must be confessed that an Earl not proud of his rank is a very strange anomaly in the history of the human species, but in the present case it can be accounted for from the circumstance, that on his entrance into the world the Earl of Glencoe appeared on the great stage of it as the son of a private gentleman ; and having been brought up and educated as such, he carried with him through the remainder of his life the principles belonging to that station. At his birth, the prospect of ever arriving at the peerage was so very remote, that he scarcely ever directed his thoughts to it ; but the heirs-expectant gradually dropped off, and at the age of twenty-three the title and all the estates belonging to it devolved to him as the heir-at-law. His elevation naturally threw him into a more extended and higher sphere of life, where he accidentally encountered the noble lady with the royal Fergusian blood ; and who, being in possession of no small portion of personal charms, the heart of the young Earl became spifflicated with love, which in a very short time terminated in marriage. It must, however, be recorded, that with the exception of the strong views of his lady to the glories and advantages of rank, the Earl had no reason to repent of the choice which he had made ; for in other respects she was an amiable and virtuous woman ; and when it is considered that woman is in herself one of the most extraordinary compositions of nature, the constituent principles of which, however, we dare not enumerate, the Earl had abundant reasons to congratulate himself, that the woman whom he selected as his wife had only conspicuously *one* blemish.

As matters however stood, the house of the Earl was divided against itself; and the consequences of such a division are so well known as not to require from us any repetition. To those, however, who are conversant with family affairs, the truth must be at once apparent, that in the direction or establishment of the affections of the daughter, the mother possesses in general a far greater influence than the father. Their domestic avocations, and the similarity of their pursuits bring the daughter into a closer relationship with the mother than the father; independently of which, there is something so keen and scrutinizing in the female eye, that a mother will very often discover the wounds that the heart of her daughter may have received; whilst the father, with the usual penetration of a father on such subjects, has placed it in the list of his impossibilities. A mother, in the busy moments of idleness, (for some mothers, especially titled ones, are the most idle when they think themselves the most busy,) when sitting at the work-table, fashioning flounces, furbelows, and fringes, with a young, beauteous, and glowing daughter at her side, will generally touch upon that subject which is nearest to the heart, and in accordance with that sympathy which is the inmate of the female breast, a confidence becomes established, which, for reasons which need not here be mentioned, never can exist between the daughter and the father. To say, however, that a mother, even in the fullest confidence of her daughter, is able at all times to direct her affections, has been so often negatived, that we should be justly accused of gross and unpardonable igno-

rance of the female heart were we to assert the contrary.

It was, however, in consistency with these principles, that the Countess was continually directing the attention of her daughter to the great and manifold advantages which would result to her from her marriage with the Baronet, not considering that it was by any means necessary to stop by the way to examine how far the happiness of her daughter could be confirmed by the possession of those moral and amiable qualities, which are such necessary ingredients in the composition of a happy marriage. The rank, and the expectation of a still higher one, were the sole objects to which she directed her attention; and although the sneers and sarcasms which at times escaped from the Earl respecting the number of noodles and doodles who figure away in the world with a title prefixed to their name, might have, and did produce a counter effect on the heart of Lady Amelia, particularly when she thought of one individual, who was neither in the possession of a title nor in expectation of one, yet it must be confessed, that previously to her acquaintance with that person, she was, on the subject of rank, more disposed to listen to the praises which her mother so incessantly bestowed upon its beneficial superiority than to the degrading opinion which her father hazarded whenever the subject came to be discussed between her parents. Love is however a leveller of all rank and dignity; and whatever lessons parents may teach their daughters on the outward observances of the forms and ceremonies attendant upon the possession

of a title, one word sometimes from the lips of the lover will obliterate every previous impression, and the only condition which is coveted, is that which is occupied by him, and the only rank which is desired is that of his wife.

CHAPTER XVI.

Come away, come away,
Come away to the masquerade ;
Where the fair and the brave,
The gay and the grave,
Regale us with sunshine and shade.

FITZALLAN was sitting in his study, pondering on the intricacy of his present situation, and forming to himself the most singular plans for his future conduct, when the following letter was delivered to him.

“ SIR,—In answer to your message delivered to me by a man of the name of Campbell, I will only say, that I will for this time condescend to overlook such a gross act of presumption as that committed by you, in supposing that I could so far degrade myself, as to enter into any hostile conflict with a person of your low condition. You must be well aware, that in regard to each other we stand in the same relation as a piece of brown paper to a bank note ; and I now inform you, that if you, after this notice, offer any insult to any female acquaintance of mine, I shall instruct one of my grooms to bestow upon you the requisite quantity of chastisement.

“ I remain, Sir, yours, &c.

“ HENRY MONTFORT.”

Fitzallan threw the letter on the table with the utmost spirit of indignation, and his mind was soon made up as to the line of conduct which he should pursue the very first time that he came into contact with the supercilious Baronet. He had, however, scarcely recovered from the resentful feelings which the perusal of such an insulting letter had excited, when a note of a very opposite description was delivered to him from the Earl of Glencoe, soliciting the favour of as early an interview as his other engagements would permit of.

Fitzallan was startled at the receipt of this note; and he pondered within himself as to the purport for which the interview was requested. He examined the different events which had lately occurred in relation to himself, and he could not discover one in which the Earl was interested, or, under any circumstances, which could be attended with so great an urgency as the tenour of the note seemed to indicate. As to the hostile message which he had sent to Sir Henry Montfort, the Earl was by no means personally concerned in it; but so prone are we to imbue certain acts with bright and favourable colours, accordingly as our wishes direct they should be, that Fitzallan interpreted the note of the Earl to spring from some interference on the part of Lady Amelia, as to the consequences which might result from any hostile meeting of the offended parties; and he so far gave reins to his fancy, as to suppose that her anxiety arose solely respecting himself, and that it had not the slightest reference to the fate of her intended husband.

He hesitated not a moment in complying with the wishes of the Earl, and in a few minutes he was on the road to his mansion. It is not customary for individuals to burden themselves with a horsewhip, unless they have some equestrian expedition in view ; and therefore it excited the surprise of some of the inmates of Fitzallan's house, when they saw him depart from it with his horsewhip under his arm, at the same time that his dress was at complete variance with that of the horseman. Being asked by Mr. Bode the cause of his taking such an instrument with him, when he avowed that he was not going to mount his horse, he briefly replied, that it was to chastise a particular ass, if it should fall in his way, in order to prevent him giving him any further trouble and annoyance.

Fitzallan was now opposite the house, the residence of Adeline Gordon, when looking up to the drawing-room window, he espied her in all the voluptuous negligence of a morning dress, and had not his heart been occupied with the image of another object, it would have been scarcely possible for him to have resisted the dazzling splendour of the charms which nature, in one of her most lavish moods, had so profusely bestowed upon her. The history of the human heart, particularly the female one, will for ever remain a concealed book ; for although many have pretended to read some of the most difficult chapters in it, and have given us, according to their own construction, their correct sense and meaning, yet on a closer examination and analysis, they find that in their previous judgment they were wholly

mistaken, and that the conclusions which they drew, were at utter variance with truth. To read the heart of Adeline Gordon, was far beyond the power of such a tyro on the subject as Hector Fitzallan; but he was fully conscious of the fascination which surrounded her, and that there were moments, when a tear from her eye would have spoken a language too expressive to be misunderstood, and the result of which would have been a complete overthrow of all the firmness of his nature. Adeline greeted him with all the familiarity of the intimate acquaintance; the compliment was returned by Fitzallan, and she had thrown open the window to invite him to a confidential *tête-à-tête*, when he observed a person approaching him at a small distance, whom he immediately recognised to be Sir Henry Montfort. Adeline, her beauty and her invitation, were instantly forgotten; the glow of an honest indignation flushed his cheeks, and without any further ceremony, he accosted the Baronet, demanding from him the avowal or the denial of his being the writer of the letter, which he then held in his hand?

“I do not consider myself, Sir,” said the Baronet, “called upon by any principles of courtesy, to offer an explanation for any part of my conduct, but to those whom I consider my equals.”

“Are you the author of this letter?” demanded Fitzallan, in a bold and peremptory tone.

“It is a question which I will not answer,” said the Baronet, and he made a motion as if to proceed on his way.

“Stop,” said Fitzallan, “you and I have a few more words to say to each other before we part.”

"It is perfectly consistent with the opinion which I have formed of you," said the Baronet, "thus to stop a gentleman of my rank in the open streets."

"As to your rank, Sir Henry," said Fitzallan, "I place no value upon it, and as to the gentleman, I only know him by his conduct. This is, however, useless parleying; I again ask you, are you the author of this letter?"

"And I again say," said the Baronet, "that I will not answer the question."

"Then," said Fitzallan, applying his horsewhip most lustily over the shoulders of the Baronet, to the laughter and ridicule of many of the bystanders, "I stigmatize you as the writer of it, I denounce you to be a mean and pitiful coward;" and giving him another hearty lash over the shoulders, "I inflict upon you that punishment, which such men of rank, and such gentlemen as you have shown yourself to be, deserve to receive from every individual whom you think yourself entitled to insult on the ground of a supposed inferiority."

There is, perhaps nothing more galling to the feelings of the coxcomb, the effeminate *petit-maître*, or the bloated simpleton of rank, than to see himself humiliated in the presence of a young and beautiful woman. It denies the existence of that very property, which, from an innate sense of their own weakness, women love most to see in men, and the absence of which exposes them to their contempt and scorn. It generally happens that an exposure of this kind will rouse the frigid spirit of the most confirmed coward, and that rather than see himself degraded in the eyes

of a female beauty, he will put on a show of resistance and ape the warrior, although no warring spirit be in him.

Fitzallan stood before the humbled Baronet, with his arms folded, and the smarting weapon in his hand. "Now, Sir Henry," he said, "I am still open to grant you every satisfaction which you may think yourself entitled to demand of me, for my previous or my present conduct. I again repeat it, that I hold you to be a dastardly coward, and that you are a disgrace to the rank which you hold in society."

"Mr. Fitzallan, Sir," stammered the Baronet, choked with rage, "I say, Mr. Fitzallan, for this unprovoked attack upon me, upon a man of my rank, I shall appeal—yes, Sir—I shall instantly appeal for redress to the laws of my country."

"There also," exclaimed Fitzallan, "will I meet you; but it is only such poltroons as yourself that crouch under the wing of the law, when you have lost sight of every feeling that belongs to a man of principle and honour. You know my address, and I will appoint to-morrow, at eleven o'clock, to receive any message from you, which your wounded dignity, or your offended rank, may prompt you to transmit to me."

"No, Sir!" exclaimed the Baronet, "the usage which I have just now received is no more than I had reason to expect from one so much my inferior; it is what we persons of rank must submit to from those who are so far beneath us; it is a kind of penalty that we are obliged to pay for our

superiority. I know, however, from what quarter to seek for redress, and to that I shall instantly appeal."

With these words, he burst through the crowd which had collected to view the extraordinary scene, and in a few minutes he was safely sheltered in the residence of Adeline Gordon, into whose presence he was introduced with the most doleful countenance, and with the bitterest complaints of the gross outrage which he had suffered from the hands of a low and vulgar plebeian."

"Mr. Fitzallan really treated you in a most merciless manner, Sir Henry," said Miss Gordon.

"And you witnessed the whole of the atrocious attack upon my person?" asked Sir Henry.

"Most assuredly I did," answered Miss Gordon. "I fear you must experience considerable pain from the effects of his horsewhip?"

"Indeed," said Sir Henry, assuming a most dolorous countenance, "I do feel a very keen smarting, but it is the fate of us men of rank, when we come in contact with the *canaille*, to suffer every species of indignity. I have been the instrument of exposing the scandalous conduct of the blackguard fellow, in regard to Miss Manners, and now he seeks his revenge."

"To Miss Manners!" repeated Adeline, "that information is new to me; I was not aware that any rumours were in circulation of any clandestine intercourse between those parties."

Sir Henry now proceeded to relate to Adeline the whole of the narrative as detailed to him by Monckton, and his consequent interference as the champion

of Miss Manners, to rescue her from the machinations of Fitzallan.

"I much fear, Sir Henry," said Adeline, "that you will find that you have been labouring under a great mistake, as to any attachment existing on the part of Miss Manners for Mr. Fitzallan."

"That cannot be," said Sir Henry, "for every action denotes that a very strong affection does exist in her breast for the unworthy fellow; and what stronger proof can be adduced of it, than, when I considered it my duty, as the destined husband of her most confidential friend, to interfere in her behalf, and to expose the dishonourable and unprincipled conduct of her lover, she fainted away, and was only recovered by the restoratives which I was despatched to bring to her assistance."

"Oh! what a consummate dupe have you been made!" exclaimed Adeline; "really, Sir Henry, you will excuse my laughing—but I have heard that a female head can always outwit one of your sex; and I have now before me one of the most convincing proofs of it—ha! ha! ha!—how the two girls must in secret have laughed at you; and Fitzallan too, must have looked upon you with a most contemptible opinion."

"How so? how so?" exclaimed the Baronet; "how is it possible for any one to entertain a contemptible opinion of a man of my rank?"

"A man of rank," said Adeline, "sometimes acts very foolishly; and I never yet knew that the possession of rank carried with it also the possession of wisdom."

“Allow me to say, Miss Gordon,” said the Baronet, “that when you have mingled a little more in the world, you will see cause to adopt a different opinion. But as it is my intention to appeal to the law for satisfaction for the scandalous indignity which I have just now suffered from the hands of that contemptible fellow, we will, if you please, enter upon the subject to which this interview immediately refers, as I am given to understand that you have some information to give me of a private nature, which materially concerns my future interests.”

“It is very true;” said Adeline, “but you must consider me in this affair as merely the agent of another; but who that person is, I stipulate, as one condition to be imposed on you, that you will never call upon me to disclose the name.”

“It is really surprising,” said the Baronet, “how warmly some persons interest themselves in my behalf; such is one of the advantages of rank.”

“Pardon me,” said Adeline, who knew the aptitude of the Baronet to swallow every dose of flattery that was offered to him, however gross the ingredients might be, “you have attributed it, Sir Henry, I rather think, to the wrong cause; it must be owing to the well-founded regard which they entertain for the virtues and good qualities which you display, in the different transactions in which you have been engaged.”

“As I well know, Miss Gordon,” said the Baronet, “that you are by no means disposed to flattery, I must receive that compliment as the genuine impression of your mind.”

“You must consider, Sir Henry,” said Adeline,

what I am now going to communicate to you, as a proof of the truth of the remark which I have just now made. As a preliminary, however, may I be allowed to ask you in what character you intend to appear at the General's masquerade."

"It was my original intention," said the Baronet, "to have appeared in the character of a cardinal, in order that I might with greater propriety take under my care my dear Lady Amelia, my intended wife, who had fixed upon the character of a nun; but, for some reasons which I cannot divine, an alteration has been made, and her ladyship now appears in the character of a virgin of the sun."

"And is that definitively fixed?" asked Adeline, who was rejoiced to have extracted this information from the Baronet.

"I can assure you that it is positively determined upon," said the Baronet.

"And your character?" asked Adeline.

"It was suggested to me," said the Baronet, "that a virgin of the sun could not have a more appropriate character to escort her than Rolla, the Peruvian chief, and therefore I selected it."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Adeline, "you will be able to represent the character to the very spirit of it."

"Most undoubtedly," said the Baronet, "I have obtained the play of Pizarro, in order that I might ascertain what kind of a character Rolla was."

"He was," said Adeline, "a magnanimous, high-minded, virtuous, glorious character, in fine, he was a hero; the character of all others the most suitable for you, Sir Henry."

"True," exclaimed Sir Henry, "he fought for his Cora, as I would do for my Amelia, to the last moments of his life."

"But I do not recollect," said Adeline, with a provoking smile of irony, "that he was ever horse-whipped by Alonzo, his rival."

"For the best of all reasons, Miss Gordon," said Sir Henry, rather piqued at the uncourteous insinuation, "horsewhips were not invented in those days; independently of which, the comparison will not hold good; Alonzo was the successful rival of Rolla, but who will presume to rival me in the affections of Lady Amelia? such an event is out of the question altogether; and, therefore, no analogy subsists between the two cases; but I am certain that I shall make a conspicuous figure in the character of Rolla."

"Especially," said Adeline, "if you be called upon to enact the battle scene."

"Then you shall witness," said Sir Henry, "how the unadulterated blood of my ancestors flows in my veins; and I will rival in manlihood and daring courage, the exploits of Sir Hubert de Montfort, my great progenitor, who in the battle of Hastings slew three hundred men with his own hand."

"I remember," said Adeline, "reading that very gallant feat in the travels of Baron Munchausen."

"A most worthy and dignified man that Munchausen," said Sir Henry; "he was not one of the mushroom dignitaries of the present day, who are one moment amongst their tubs, tea-chests, and butter firkins, and the next strutting away on the stilts of nobility. I knew him well, he was the intimate

acquaintance of my father. I must, however, inform you that he was a Baron of German extraction, but nevertheless, a man on whose veracity you could implicitly rely; for I remember hearing him tell my father, that although the whole three hundred were left dead on the field of battle, two hundred and ninety five of them were afterwards restored to life by the very seasonable interposition of some Catholic priests; which circumstance, I can assure you, Miss Gordon, has so prepossessed my mind in regard to the worthy dignitaries of that Church, that the carrying of the emancipation of the Catholics through both Houses of Parliament, is mainly to be attributed to the extraordinary influence which I used in a certain exalted quarter, and which has given such an additional celebrity to my name, that will make it for ever conspicuous in the annals of my country."

During this rodomontade of the Baronet, to which Adeline paid very little attention, or only so much as to augment the contempt, which she had always entertained for him, she was occupying her mind with a scheme, which she had for some time had in view, to ruin Fitzallan in the esteem of the Glencoe family, and thereby to render her own conquest of him more secure. The Baronet having finished his recital of the intimacy of his family with the celebrated Baron Munchausen of German extraction, Adeline expressed her anxiety to disclose to him the interesting information which she was commissioned by a certain lady to communicate to him, but who, for very cogent reasons, did not wish her name to be divulged. "It is such information," said Adeline,

“which concerns your future happiness, and for which you will never be able to make sufficient amends to the individual who so disinterestedly comes forward to warn you of the danger which impends over you.”

“God bless me!” exclaimed the Baronet, “danger did you say, Miss Gordon? what possible danger can hang over me?”

“I can assure you, Sir Henry,” said Adeline, “that a dark and treacherous scheme is now in agitation, if my information be correct, and I would disclose to you my authority, were I not restricted by a solemn injunction of secrecy, against your future happiness, and which if suffered to be matured, will rob you of that object, to whom you are at present so deservingly attached.”

“I know of only one object to whom I am attached,” said Sir Henry; “and as to any plan which may be devised to rob me of that, why they might as well attempt to rob me of my rank.”

“Take care, Sir Henry,” said Adeline, “that you are not sleeping over a mine, which, in the moment least expected, may blow you to atoms. Be thankful, however, that you have it in your power to ward off the danger, and to discover the individuals who are your secret enemies. Now listen to my instructions. At the masquerade of General Hamilton, look out for a nun of the Ursuline order: it is possible, however, there may be several in that character. In order, however, to avoid all mistake, accost the nun that has a small white rosette on her left side; from her you will receive some information, which will explain to you many things which you now view in a very

opposite light ; and which will prove to you that you are at this present moment one of the greatest dupes that the ingenuity of woman ever made, and by a party to which you attach not the slightest suspicion."

" But in what am I the dupe, Miss Gordon ?" asked the Baronet ; " surely nothing belonging to my rank."

" How is it possible for me, Sir Henry," said Adeline, " to expound to you in what particular you are the dupe. The information is to come from other lips than mine ; and having now fulfilled the commission which was intrusted to me, I have only to request from you, that you will not divulge to any one the purport of our present conversation ; for were it to be even partially known, the consequences might be very injurious to yourself."

" Depend upon it," said the Baronet, " I would not divulge it even to my dear Lady Amelia. But can you tell me the costume of an Ursuline nun ; for I have been told that the nuns have as many uniforms as the English army, and in many respects equally ridiculous and fantastical."

" The dress of this nun, I am given to understand," said Adeline, " will be a black shirt, with a white capote and hood, and her rosary, according to the injunctions of the pious foundress, will be composed of great and little beads alternately, which are supposed to be typical of the great and little sins, which the votary may have committed. But, *à propos*, Sir Henry, is it true that the Glencoe family have interfered in this affair of Miss Manners and Fitzallan ?"

"It is I, Miss Gordon," said the Baronet, "who have interfered."

"And pray," asked Adeline, "how did Lady Amelia receive the information of the indignity which was offered to her friend?"

"As became her," said the Baronet; "with the utmost resentment; and when I insisted upon escorting Lady Amelia and Miss Manners to their homes, it is impossible for me to describe to you the contempt and indifference with which both of them turned their backs upon the fellow; we finally left him standing by himself in the pathway, a spectacle of the most abject humiliation, to return, as he had himself the impudence to declare, to his cottage, and the pretty little dove that inhabits it."

At this moment one of those susquepedalian knocks with which the party-coloured tribe are taught to alarm a neighbourhood, was heard at the door, announcing one of those fashionable visitors, who wander on a morning from house to house; and having dropped a certain modicum of slander in one, and picked up a proportionate quantity of the same commodity in another, endeavour to ingratiate themselves with that particular class of human beings, who fancy that every fault which they can detect in their fellow being, contributes to their own purity and immaculacy. A provincial town is in general the very focus of slander and detraction; cooped up, as it were, within a given space, the human bipeds jostle each other at every step and motion; the idle are exceedingly busy in troubling their heads with what does not concern them, and the busy consider

that they should not act up to their reputed character, if they did not extend their business to every quarter where some information is to be acquired of the latest wounds that have been inflicted on the character of a virtuous and ingenuous female, and the consequent probability of her becoming a mother before a right reverend priest, according to the wholesome and meritorious institutions of civilized life, has received a stipulated sum as the purchase of his permission for a creature of nature to be allowed to follow the laws and dictates of nature.

To suppose that the very momentous circumstance of Sir Henry Montfort, a man of rank, of opulence, and of consideration, having been horsewhipped in the public streets by a comparatively insignificant individual, should not have set all the tongues of the town agog, can only be disbelieved by those who have escaped the misfortune of having been the residents of a provincial town, and who consequently cannot form any idea of the avidity with which such an extraordinary and highly important event is gathered up by the coterie of scandal-mongers, male and female, which form no small portion of what is technically called polished society. Now, whether Sir Henry had a presentiment that the aforementioned sonorous knocking at the door proceeded from one of those itinerant scandal-mongers, eager to convey to one of the ruling beauties of the town the tidings of his degradation, cannot positively be decided as a fact, but it is certain that he was swayed by some sudden impulse; for, bouncing from his chair, he waited not for the announcement of the new visitor,

but hurried out of the room, as if the intelligence had been brought him that a messenger had arrived from the Heralds' office, that emporium of absurdity and of libels on the creations of God, announcing to him that the bloody hand was in future to be erased from his coat of arms.

On descending the stairs, Sir Henry met one of those antiquated, restless, and insufferable nuisances, ycleped an old maid, who, being shut out against her will from some of the dearest joys of human life, sallies forth, like the animal of holy writ, from morn to night, marring the bliss and happiness of others, and founding the little that she can herself enjoy on the wrecks and fragments of the hearts that she has destroyed.

Let the reader (and he may be allowed the most exuberant imagination with which a mortal was ever gifted) fancy to himself the worthy Baronet descending the stairs leading from the drawing-room of Adeline Gordon; and let him further fancy at the same time, exactly in the middle of the flight of the said stairs, the Baronet meeting a good, portly, waddling, Daniel Lambert-like personage, on her head one of those extraordinary funguses of fashion, those ridiculous and unbecoming abortions of a vitiated taste, which England's beautiful women are content to receive from their milliners at the expence of the total disfigurement of their angel faces; let the said lady be further equipped with those monstrosities, the invention of some hater of the symmetry and beauty of the female form, known in the hemisphere of fashion, and particularly amongst the late worthy

epicure Dr. Kitchener's favourites—namely, the cooks, as the leg of mutton sleeve, and thence ascending from the kitchen, appears as a protuberance on either side of the tenant of the drawing-room, like two huge bladders, which only require a little aid from one of the gas companies to be so inflated, that from their extreme buoyancy the wearer may dance with the fictitious agility of the Fantoccini. Let the reader further fancy, that the stairs were exactly of those dimensions which are to be found in some modern edifices, in which it was never intended that two lovers should walk abreast, but that they should follow each other like geese, in lineal succession. Let him fancy these things, and then he will have a correct conception of the awkward predicament in which Sir Henry found himself on meeting a lady of such portly dimensions, natural and artificial, on such a staircase, on which politeness dictated to him to retrograde, in order to allow the advance of the ascending mass, or to push on, pell mell, until she of the fungus hat and of the leg of mutton sleeve was, by the action of the descending force, that is, by Sir Henry himself, propelled to the very lowest step from which she had originally set out. Neither of these two possible cases however took place. The Baronet stood still, and the lady stood still also; the Baronet unable to pass the lady, and the lady unable to pass the Baronet. We know not what Yorick, "that infinite jester," would have made of this scene; he would have given to it all the rich colouring of his inimitable fancy; and in his way of laying on his colours, the Methodist would doubtless have spitten

the blackness of his venom upon him ; and the Calvinistic Stylite, in the spirit of his intolerance and bigotry, would have loaded him with all the vituperation and supercilious scorn for which his sect is so distinguished. With such people, however, we profess not to have, nor wish to have any thing to do. We can only say, that we compassionate those who have undergone the misfortune to have taken up their abode contiguous to a Methodist or a Stylite ; (we are personal in the latter case for very cogent reasons ;) for harmless mirth to them is dissonance, and a display of liberal sentiment and an enlarged mode of thinking, which will not be biassed by antiquated prejudices and empty ceremonies, are by them converted into a heinous offence offered to their usurped superiority, and their sectarian pride and sanctity.

We beg pardon, however, of two of the characters of this authentic exhibition of human life ; for whilst we have for a moment condescended to occupy ourselves with the rubbish of sectarianism, we have left Sir Henry Montfort and his female acquaintance standing opposite to each other on the stairs ; the lady very naturally looking up to the gentleman, and the gentleman, equally naturally, looking down upon the lady ; and in truth it must be spoken, that the Baronet did look down upon the lady in more senses than one, for she happened to be the spouse of a member of a certain class of men on whom courtesy bestows the title of gentleman, forgetting to remember at the same time that there are few men of his caste who by the general character of their actions deserve the epithet which is given to them. Mrs. Jonathan Doe

was the wife of an attorney; that is, of a man who lives by the quarrels and litigious spirit of his fellow-creatures, and whose interest it is to foment those quarrels, although he thereby renders himself the counterpart in villainy and rascality; and further it must be mentioned, that the name of Jonathan Doe had on a certain occasion appeared conspicuously at the back of a strip of parchment addressed to the sheriff of a certain county, in which the said sheriff was commanded to take into custody the body of the said Sir Henry Montfort, on a plea of trespass done to one Obadiah Jenkins; and for which trespass the aforesaid Sir Henry had to pay to the aforesaid Jonathan Doe, for the use and benefit of the aforesaid Obadiah Jenkins, the sum of thirty pounds principal money, and interest; and for his own legalized plunderings, called costs, the further sum of forty-two pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence. That the wife of Mr. Jonathan Doe, associated as the name was with some very unpleasant feelings on the part of the Baronet arising from the above transaction, should receive from him any courtesy or politeness could not rationally be expected, except by those cringing, fawning, slavish, and pitiful cast of creatures, who, partaking of the nature of the spaniel, fawn upon their oppressors in proportion as they are treated with indignity and severity. Thus we have considered it due to the character of Sir Henry Montfort, who by his rank and station in life ought to have been in possession of the manners of the finished gentleman, to account for his want of politeness in not retracing his steps, and allowing Mrs.

Jonathan Doe to ascend to the first landing, where they could have carried on the *tête-à-tête* as hereafter described with all the urbanity and decorum appertaining to their respective characters. It has been said, (but that is no positive reason why it should be true,) that a man is not bound to give more than one good and substantial reason for his actions ; to the great credit of Sir Henry Montfort it must however be stated, that he was enabled to give two ; and therefore, according to the arithmetical ratio, he has a double claim upon our esteem and regard. The very position in which Sir Henry was placed obliged him to look down upon the attorney's wife. For that obligatory act no blame can be imputed to him, but then, can the same exculpation be offered for him on account of the spirit which actuated him to look down upon the attorney's wife as so far beneath him, not on the steps of the stairs, but in point of rank and condition ; he a Baronet, the heir-expectant to a dukedom, and she—what was she ? a pettifogging attorney's wife ; and consequently, in his eyes, as only one degree removed from the very *canaille*. If, however, there be one act more than another which arouses the inflammable spirit of aristocratical pride, it is, when an inferior presumes to address the titled superior with all the familiarity and freedom of the equal.

“God bless me !” exclaimed Mrs. Doe, still standing on the middle of the stairs, with one hand leaning on the banisters, “you cannot think, Sir Henry, how glad I am to see you ; I heard that you were almost killed.”

“Killed, ma'am !” repeated the Baronet. “I am not aware what can have given rise to such a report.”

"Well! I declare," said Mrs. Doe, "there is scarcely believing any thing we hear. I just now called in to see my friend, Mrs. Figgins, the grocer's wife—I believe you are acquainted with her, Sir Henry?"

"A grocer's wife!" exclaimed Sir Henry, highly indignant, "I am not in the habit, madam, of associating with such low bred people; you will perhaps allow me to pass you, ma'am."

"It was Mrs. Figgins who told me," said Mrs. Doe, paying no attention to the request of the Baronet, "that you were nearly killed. But, dear o' me, Sir Henry, it was a sad business for you to be so ill-used; to be kicked and thumped as you have been."

"Madam!" exclaimed the Baronet, who made a motion to extricate himself from his dilemma, "I am ignorant of ever having been kicked or thumped; but really we are now trespassing very unbecomingly on Miss Gordon's hospitality."

"I thought," said Mrs. Doe, "that I would just drop in and make some inquiries of Miss Gordon respecting you, Sir Henry. I can assure you your late mishap, Sir Henry, is the talk of the whole town: go where I will, the first inquiry is—Have you heard of this unpleasant affair of Sir Henry Montfort?—But I hope you intend to punish the audacious fellow. Ah! if the business were but in my husband's hands, he would make him smart for his misdoings. But I suppose, Sir Henry, you found considerable relief from the bleeding?"

"Bleeding!" ejaculated the Baronet, who was

now beginning to lose all command of his temper, "I've never been bled at all, madam."

"Ah! true," responded Mrs. Doe, "it was not certain, according to the report, whether you were bled or blistered; but I suppose, Sir Henry, you still feel the soreness of the bruises."

"Bled, blistered, and bruises!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "it is a great pity that people will not attend to their own business, and cease to interfere with mine. I have no bruises about me, madam."

"I assure you, Sir Henry," said Mrs. Doe, "since the time that Miss Janet Sallows committed the *faux pas* with young Squire Higginbottom, I know of no circumstance which has made a greater noise in the town than this outrageous attack upon your person. And pray, Sir Henry, what do you intend to do about it? Do you mean to indict him for an assault? or do you intend to return the compliment the first time you meet him? or perhaps, more likely, and more consistently with etiquette, you'll call him out? O dear o' me! what will the town say if one of you be killed; or if you should lose only an arm or a leg?"

"I wish you had lost your tongue," said Sir Henry to himself; but to the questions of the garrulous Mrs. Doe, the Baronet found himself in the same situation as the worthy brewer of Chiswell-street, when the great monarch of the greatest kingdom of the world so overpowered him with his long chain of questions, that the brewer exclaimed

May I be curst
If I know which to answer first.

“ Mrs. Doe—madam,” said the Baronet, putting one of his feet on the same stair on which the lady was standing, “ I—I—.”

“ And pray, Sir Henry,” said Mrs. Doe, stopping closer the avenue by which the Baronet hoped to escape, “ is it true that this whole business has arisen on account of a rivalry for the hand of Lady Amelia Fortescue? if so, I am not at all surprised at what has happened ; but I assure you, Sir Henry, if I can be the means of rectifying any error, which may have gone abroad respecting the transaction, you may command my services to their full extent. I have no doubt the affair will be the sole theme of conversation at Mrs. Snitterling’s rout this evening ; and it is a great pity, Sir Henry, that a falsity should be circulated, to the detriment, perhaps, of your character ; when, if you will give me a statement of the real particulars, I shall be able to quote your own authority for the refutation of the scandalous reports.”

During this harangue of Mrs. Doe, the Baronet had contrived to gain a footing for his other leg on the stair, and the dialogists now stood in that position to each other, that had it pleased the Baronet, he might have thrown his arms round the neck of Mrs. Doe, and, but for the intervention of the fungusian hat, have impressed a warm salute on her cherry lips ; but as it was, the Baronet did no such thing. Then it may with propriety be asked—What did he? He saw the cheering prospect of emancipation before him ; he saw himself delivered from one of the greatest plagues that the world knows—the tongue of a silly, garrulous woman.

"I am, however, Sir Henry," said Mrs. Doe, "truly rejoiced to see that you have escaped so well, and that you have been neither bled nor blistered, and as to your bruises—my grandmother—"

"D——n your grandmother," said Sir Henry, muttering to himself, as he made a kind of hop, skip, and jump down the remainder of the stairs, to the no small discomfiture of Mrs. Doe, who was on the point of imparting to the Baronet her grandmother's prescription for bruises, as well as to the great delight of Adeline Gordon, who had overheard the whole of the dialogue, and who secretly enjoyed the humiliation to which the Baronet had been exposed. To relate the subsequent conversation between Mrs. Doe and Adeline, would be merely a stale repetition of a scene that has been a thousand times represented, and will continue to be represented as long as a particle of curiosity remains in the composition of woman, which is equivalent to saying, as long as the world exists; it was merely an inane, senseless intermixture of inquiry and conjecture, of question and rejoinder; of detraction on the one side, and justification on the other; and they at length separated, neither of them a jot the wiser, nor a tittle the better informed on any point which had come under their discussion.

CHAPTER XVII.

All thoughts, all passions, and delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of love,
And feed his holy flame.

FITZALLAN having administered to the Baronet *quantum suff.* of corporeal castigation, very deliberately, and in complete satisfaction with himself, directed his steps towards the abode of the Earl of Glencoe. We have before ventured to express our opinion, that chance has a great deal to do in the affairs of this world, for which opinion, we know, we subject ourselves to the anathemas, hatred, and persecution of a horde of insignificants, who abuse the reason which their bounteous Creator has given them by adhering to a belief that one is three and three is one, but *non magna componere parva*—which in English may be rendered, not to compare great things with small, or, according to another version, not to compare a blockhead with a wise man; that is, a Methodist ranter with a Lawrence, or a Brixton Stylite with a Byron or a Shelley. Taking, therefore, our own principles for a guide, we declare that it was the effect of chance, and of chance only, that,

at the precise moment when Fitzallan was composedly approaching the house of the Earl of Glencoe, Lady Amelia and her friend Julia should be just standing at that particular window, which commanded a full and uninterrupted view of every object seeking ingress into the house, and at the same time, that it could not be conjectured, that any specific purpose attracted them to that identical spot.

There was, however, one trait in the character of Fitzallan, of which few of his associates were aware, much less a fond affectionate girl, who, like the majority of her sex under similar circumstances, never troubled her head with a cold analytical examination of the character of him, for whom her heart pleaded so warmly, and even over whose vices that same affection would have rather thrown the veil of concealment, than have contributed to their exposure; yet with all this forbearance, this grateful partiality, which renders woman so doubly dear to the heart that knows how to appreciate her virtues, and which throws, as it were, a mellowed light over the gloomy path of human life, where is the female that under the influence of those feelings has not been led astray, and suddenly awakening from her wanderings, has not wished that all was but a—dream?

We have, however, digressed from exposing a trait in the character of Fitzallan, to that of exposing a trait in the character of woman, and we are certain of not being thanked for the latter, favourable and complimentary as it may appear, for its very favour and its compliment partake of weakness; and as far as our experience extends, we have uniformly found,

that a female would rather have her vices exposed, than her weaknesses.

To elucidate, however, this hidden trait in the character of Fitzallan, it must be mentioned to be that particular one, of which few breasts are destitute, but which, like all other passions, exhibits itself in a greater or lesser degree, according to the enthusiastic or phlegmatic constitution of the individual; condensing, however, that passion in a few letters, it may be designated as *pride*. Nevertheless, we acknowledge it in some respects to be the parent of all that is great and noble in the human character; for where there is pride, there is ambition, and without ambition, man is a mere machine without a propelling power, from which no work of excellence or merit can be expected. Let it not, however, be considered that by pride we mean that display of peacock haughtiness with which the flaunting dame ambles down the aisle of the church or conventicle, to display her gaudy attire to the occupants of the surrounding pews, delighted if every eye be directed towards her in envy of her fashionable gewgaws—no, we mean that pride of the soul, arising from a consciousness of internal merit, that dignified sense, if we may so express it, of ourselves, and which, upon the same principle that it will not overlook an insult offered to its own dignity, is particularly cautious and circumspect in what manner it offends the same feelings in others.

Strong and deeply rooted as was the affection of Fitzallan for Lady Amelia, and solicitous as that affection might be to throw over all her actions the palliating hue of indulgence and forbearance, yet

when pride comes into collision with love, the contest is generally severe, and in some instances the former has been known to carry off the victory. The manner in which Lady Amelia had conducted herself towards him at their last interview, had, with the consciousness that it was unmerited, inflicted a deep and galling wound upon his pride; he felt himself humiliated by the very nature of the charge that had been raised against him, and the credulity with which Lady Amelia seemed to receive all the evil reports against him, confirmed him in the opinion that a change had taken place in her heart towards him, and that the coldness and indifference with which she treated him were not assumed, but were the genuine display of her actual feelings.

When, therefore, Fitzallan beheld the ladies standing at the window, and a smile on each of their countenances, instead of the frown of haughty displeasure so peculiar to the female face under the influence of resentment for some supposed offence, the wounds of his offended pride burst out afresh, and so far from returning the smile, he saluted them with the most distant formality, such as would become an acquaintance of yesterday, not one whose hand he had pressed, and who had pressed his in return.

We will not utter a libel against woman, at whose shrine we bend our knee in fervent gratitude as the bestower of the greatest happiness of which this world can boast, but, after all, woman is a most extraordinary compound: to find a resemblance for her in the earth, on the earth, or above the earth—though, perhaps, in heaven it is to be found—were

one of those tasks as difficult as that of the alchemist, who, from his combination of heterogeneous substances, flattered himself that he could produce the most precious metal of the world. We will not attempt to analyze the feelings of Lady Amelia when she observed the repellent and distant conduct of Fitzallan, but which, if she had dared to examine according to their real origin, she would have fallen at once upon the discovery of the full extent of the affection which she entertained for him. Consistently, however, with the opinion which we have ventured to hazard touching the constitution of the female character, Lady Amelia no sooner beheld herself the apparent object of indifference to Fitzallan, than the whole spirit of the woman burst forth; she took a retrospective view of her behaviour towards him; it was found by far too harsh and severe; she had treated him as culpable upon the mere representation of another, and that person well known to be the slave of prejudice, and a willing tool of the dastardly calumniator. She had, as it were, in the moment of pettish irritation (and there is no individual more prone to that feeling than a girl in love) interposed a barrier between any future course of intimacy between them. She had mounted the stilts of feminine resentment, and with the love of power so natural to the female breast, she expected that her slave would throw himself at her feet, and entreat a restoration to her favour by a promise of amendment for the future, accompanied with the most fervent protestations of his unalterable love. Oh! there is nothing more grateful to the female heart, than the

realization of such a scene ; at that moment the world appears to her as her own, herself the ruling divinity ; she feels the supremacy of her power, and in the blessed moments of reconciliation (and who that has enjoyed those moments but would wish to enjoy them o'er again) she may exclaim with the great German poet,

Ich habe genossen das irdisches glück
Ich habe gelebt und geliebt.*

But when she is doomed to experience the contrast, when resentment is met by resentment, when the dreadful image starts before her, tracing in characters too distinct to be misunderstood " I have, perhaps, lost him," then shines forth the real woman ; the counterfeit is laid aside ; the heart then becomes the officious tell-tale of its smothered feelings, and a tear starts into the eye with all the intrusion of the unbidden guest.

So stood it with Amelia Fortescue ; she, in the plenitude of a woman's feelings, fully anticipated that the smile which sat on her angel countenance, indicative almost of an oblivion of the past, would be met by a corresponding smile, and that it would be returned with all the joyfulness of a first and life-blood passion. And then she thought (and what thought more harrowing to the female breast) that he, perhaps, loved another ; that by her own conduct she had, perhaps, bound him stronger to that being, and that they were henceforth to be alienated

* I have enjoyed the bliss of earth,
I have lived and I have loved. *Schiller.*

from each other, and she to be in the world as some restless spectre of a murdered love ; she looked at him again and again, in the full spirit of an offended pride, he appeared to divert his attention from all surrounding objects, and strode stately forwards, as if with the formal return which he had made to the greeting which he had received, he had done all which could be expected from him, and that he had no further inclination to exceed the bounds which formality or ceremony prescribed to him.

This was a decisive moment for Amelia ; she had for some time struggled against the conflict of feelings which assailed her, but she was obliged to yield at last, and throwing her arms around the neck of Julia, she burst into a flood of tears. At this moment the Countess entered the room, eager to convey the information of the unexpected visit of Fitzallan, and discuss the question, as to the motive which could have impelled him to such an extraordinary step, the Earl having, for certain reasons best known to himself, refrained from apprizing the Countess of his message to Fitzallan, and consequently it was her belief, that Fitzallan's visit was an act on his part entirely spontaneous, and connected solely with his own affairs. When a mother, however, sees a daughter in tears, an alarm immediately takes rise in the maternal breast, that there is some secret worm gnawing at the heart, the ravages of which are the most dangerous, because they are carried on under the covert of disguise. On the other hand, there is not anything of which a daughter has a greater dread, than the scrutinizing eye of the

mother in any affair in which the heart is concerned, and under the present influence of her feelings, her mother was, perhaps, the last person whom Lady Amelia would have wished to intrude herself into her presence; but the part now to be enacted was one of great difficulty. A cause was to be given for those tears, and of all possible causes, where is the girl under the circumstances in which Lady Amelia was placed, who would not fix upon any one than the real one. A female has always certain weapons peculiar to her sex wherewith to carry on the contest in which she may be engaged, and one of the most powerful and certain of success is artifice. It must, however, be considered that female artifice is not always dissimulation, but on the other hand, dissimulation is always female artifice, or at least, it is the nurse of it. It may not indeed be positively stated that dissimulation is a real failing of the female character, for perhaps it may be owing to education; but nevertheless, it is certain that by female dissimulation, nauseous as may be the truth to digest, the whole of the male sex are governed; although it be most pompously and arrogantly affirmed that they do not believe themselves subject to any such government, still, however, it is not to be disputed, that artifice with beauty combined composes the omnipotence of the female sex.

The Countess at first entreated to know the cause of her daughter's tears, for as far as the domestic relations extended, she was not aware of any event having taken place within the house which could give rise to such an effusion of sorrow, and therefore, the only

plausible construction that could be put upon it was, that her feelings had been wounded from some private quarter, which the artifice of her daughter had kept concealed from her. It frequently happens that an authorized or officious inquisitor into the actions of others, will in their examination of the causes of those actions, supply the delinquent with the very materials which were wanting for the defence, and which, perhaps, her own ingenuity would not at the time have ever hit upon. Thus, when the Countess had urged every plea which her maternal solicitude could devise, when she had appealed to Julia, as the bosom friend and confidant of her daughter, to disclose to her the cause of her daughter's grief, and still found the former pertinaciously silent, and the latter obstinately ignorant, she unconsciously opened a loophole through which they could escape from their dilemma, by observing, that if her daughter's grief were to be attributed to any unpleasant circumstances which might ensue to Sir Henry Montfort on account of his quarrel with Mr. Fitzallan, of the particulars of which she had been informed by her noble husband, her daughter might tranquillize her mind on that head, as the Earl had assured her, that Sir Henry would not condescend to enter into any personal conflict with an individual so far beneath him; "and I now suspect," continued her Ladyship, "that the visit of Mr. Fitzallan has some reference to his making that apology to Sir Henry, through the medium of my noble husband, which an inferior ought always to make to his superior, whenever he has ventured to conduct himself towards him as an equal."

"You have, my Lady, by that very information," said Julia, "been the unconscious instrument of restoring peace to my dear Amelia's breast. It did not become me to disclose to you the cause of her grief, seeing that she was unwilling to acquaint you with it herself; but the dreadful idea has been preying upon Lady Amelia's mind, that in consequence of the dispute which took place this morning, a hostile meeting might be in agitation; and then only think, my Lady, if *one* of them should fall, how deeply, under the circumstances in which Lady Amelia is placed, must she have felt the loss."

"True indeed," said the Countess, "I am now not at all surprised at your tears, my dear Amelia, for your grief, no doubt, must be excessive at the bare idea of the loss of Sir Henry."

"Oh! my dear mother," said Lady Amelia, wiping the tear away which still trembled on her eyelash, "would not such a loss be a deplorable event?"

"But why should you have hesitated for a moment, my dear girl," said the Countess, "to disclose to me the real state of your feelings? I should have made every rational allowance for the ebullition of your grief, rather than have pained you with my reproofs. I should have regarded it as a natural proof of your affection for your intended husband, and I am certain that the information, when conveyed to him of the warm and truly affectionate interest which you take in his behalf, will be quite overpowering to him; you cannot therefore doubt that it will tend to confirm him in persevering

in that line of conduct so becoming his rank and station."

"And you, my Lady, will, perhaps, use your influence," said Julia, "to dissuade Sir Henry from accepting any challenge that Mr. Fitzallan may send him?"

"I am not surprised, my dear Julia," said the Countess, with an expressive smile, "at the interest which you appear to take in this business; young ladies are too apt to faint at particular disclosures about their sweethearts, and to be on the very tip-toe of alarm and tribulation when a duel is talked of: but be composed on that point—I have no reason to express myself in a disrespectful manner respecting Mr. Fitzallan as far as his private character and attainments extend, but you must allow, my dear Julia, that he cannot put himself into competition with Sir Henry Montfort in point of rank and fortune?"

"But he, nevertheless," said Julia, "may make a most excellent husband; for what better properties can a girl look for in a husband, than purity of character, and the possession of useful attainments; and, without meaning to disparage the fame or reputation of Sir Henry Montfort, you will allow me to say, that the individual, who means to shelter himself under his rank for any injury or offence which it may be his pleasure to commit, should be particularly nice and scrupulous as to the person whom he aggresses. In my opinion, it betrays a mean and ungenerous spirit to trample upon and insult an individual, and then, when that individual seeks redress,

to turn round upon him, and say, that his rank prevents him from giving the redress required. Better, and more consistent with the possessor of that rank would it have been, to have acted up to the supposed dignity of his station, and never to have given the offence at all."

"I am not in the least surprised, my dear Julia," said the Countess, "in meeting in you such a warm advocate for Mr. Fitzallan; it is no more than can be naturally expected from you. I certainly do regret that Sir Henry committed himself by entering into any altercation with Mr. Fitzallan in an affair, which, I must confess, did not personally concern him; but when you look to the motive by which he was actuated, your heart ought to be impressed with feelings of the most sincere gratitude for his interference in your behalf."

"I was not aware, your Ladyship," said Julia, "that Sir Henry is in possession of any prescriptive right to interfere in the affairs of others without either their knowledge or consent. Is it in the charter of his Baronetcy?"

"It proceeds entirely," said her Ladyship, "from an innate goodness of heart; he believes that he is rendering the parties an essential service, and therefore, although it may appear intrusive, he is nevertheless to be commended for it."

"It is, however, rather singular," said Julia, "that in the conceit which he has formed, he finds himself mistaken nineteen times out of twenty, and yet is so inconsiderate as to persevere. We have a proof now before us of the great benefit which has

been derived from his interference in my supposed amour with Mr. Fitzallan ; and so deeply interested are we about the termination of it, that your Ladyship will, perhaps, have the goodness to ascertain the particulars from his Lordship of Mr. Fitzallan's visit, and hasten to communicate them to us."

" I can easily conceive," said her Ladyship, " that both of you must be in the very extreme pain of anxiety, and therefore I will not lose a moment, as soon as Mr. Fitzallan has taken his departure, of obtaining from the Earl all the information which you require ; in the mean time, let me pray of you, particularly you, my dear Amelia, to make your mind perfectly easy as to any injury that may ensue to Sir Henry ; for the influence which I possess over him, added to the principles of his own character, will be a sufficient guarantee to you for his safety."

" Oh ! my dear mother," said Lady Amelia, " I am certain that Sir Henry has too much affection for me to risk his life, when he knows that the loss of it would be such a heavy affliction to all his acquaintance."

" True, my dear," said her Ladyship, " a man of his rank is not to be met with every day."

" Nor of his extraordinary intellectual attainments," said Julia.

" Nor of his great and noble moral qualities," said Lady Amelia."

" Once more," said the Countess, " compose yourselves, my dear girls ; this is but one of those little discords that will happen in every family ; but

it will soon pass over, and we shall regain our wonted serenity and quiet."

Thus saying, she hurried out of the room, leaving the two girls to congratulate themselves on the success of their artifice, and taking to themselves no little credit for the adroitness with which they had misled the Countess in regard to the actual state of their affections, and the real object to whom they were attached.

Whilst the ladies were thus engaged in conversation, Fitzallan had been introduced into the presence of the Earl, by whom he was received with the utmost courtesy and urbanity, and who immediately entered upon the subject, on account of which the interview had been solicited. Considering the relative situation in which Sir Henry Montfort stood with the Earl respecting his daughter, it was the anxious wish of the latter to bring the affair between the Baronet and Fitzallan to such a conclusive arrangement, that the honour of his future son-in-law might be protected from those aspersions, which would most assuredly be thrown upon it by a punctilious and censorious world, were he, upon the mere plea of an inferiority of rank, to persevere in the refusal of Fitzallan's challenge.

The Earl having expressed a wish that Fitzallan would regard him in the character of a mediator between the hostile parties, and that through his intercession an avenue might be opened to an amicable arrangement, Fitzallan, in the most candid and manly manner, stated to the Earl, that after the insults which Sir Henry Montfort had offered him,

and his conduct subsequent thereon, he could never on any occasion be brought to consider Sir Henry as deserving of the character of a gentleman, or worthy of the slightest respect or courtesy.

“It is not my intention,” said the Earl, “to enter into any exposition of the general character of Sir Henry Montfort, nor do I mean, by any remark that I may make, to palliate that part of his conduct, which, I frankly confess, does appear in my eyes as rather reprehensible; but with the knowledge of some of the dominant weaknesses of his character, I am disposed to make greater allowance for any deviation from the established rules of general conduct, as sanctioned by the world, which in his eccentricity he may evince, than I might be inclined to bestow on the generality of cases.”

“Nor am I, my Lord,” said Fitzallan, “in the least disposed to regard the conduct of Sir Henry Montfort through any other medium than that of honour, propriety, and dignified deportment, and finding it wanting in those chief essentials which constitute the character of a gentleman, I must in future be allowed to regulate my conduct towards him, as a person unworthy to be received into any of the genteel classes of society. I profess myself incapable of offering a personal insult to any man, be he either my superior or inferior, and with that sentiment operating on my mind, I also declare, that I will not receive an insult, even from my superior, without demanding that satisfaction which the injured has a right to exact from the injurer.”

“I give you credit, Mr. Fitzallan,” said the Earl,

“ for the manly sentiments which you have just now expressed ; but may I be allowed to ask, if, by my influence, I can induce Sir Henry to make an apology to you for the offence which he has given, you will consent to receive it ? ”

“ My Lord,” answered Fitzallan, “ the individual who, in the plenitude of his presumptuous pride, can return such an answer as this, (and Fitzallan here delivered to the Earl the note which Sir Henry had written to him declining the challenge,) is in my opinion a man from whom no apology ought to be received ; but, my Lord, you will allow me further to state, that the man who, with the tameness and submission of the slave, will, without the slightest indication of resentment, coolly receive a sound whipping with this arm, and with the very whip which I now hold in my hand, is by far too degraded for me to receive an apology from. If he now does not make an appeal to an honourable issue, I shall hold him to be the rankest coward that ever disgraced the ranks of nobility.”

The Earl read the answer of Sir Henry, and on folding it up again, shook his head. “ But,” he said, “ am I to credit it, that you actually inflicted upon him the disgraceful chastisement which you have now mentioned ? ”

“ Not half an hour ago,” said Fitzallan, “ I accidentally met him on my way hither to attend your Lordship’s invitation ; and I hesitate not to confess, that I brought my horsewhip with me under the hope of meeting with him. I was in reality so fortunate, and having lashed him well, I left him to the

ridicule of the bystanders ; and I saw him take refuge in the house in which Miss Gordon resides, who witnessed the whole of the scene."

" Then, Mr. Fitzallan," said the Earl, " after that statement, it would be unbecoming in me, and derogatory to the rank which I hold in life, were I to advocate the cause of Sir Henry Montfort any further. I must leave him to abide by the consequences of his own perverse and truly contemptible conduct."

" And now, my Lord," said Fitzallan, " I hope, consistently with that respect which I entertain for your character and virtues, that you will allow me fully to exonerate myself from every part of the charge which Sir Henry Montfort, in direct violation of the truth, and setting at defiance all delicacy and decorum in the propagation of his falsehood, considered himself entitled to bring against me. I am particularly induced to solicit this indulgence from your Lordship, as by the base insinuations, and the calumnious reports of the Baronet, the character of an amiable and most virtuous lady, the confidant and bosom friend of your own daughter, Miss Manners, may be subject to the ordeal of a censorious and calumniating world, and may suffer severely in the estimation of it, without the most distant cause or pretext for it."

" According to the report of Sir Henry Montfort," said the Earl, " I have reason to believe that you have paid your addresses to Miss Manners, and that they have been favourably received."

" I acknowledge, my Lord," said Fitzallan, " that I enjoy the pleasure of being personally acquainted

with Miss Manners ; but, at the same time, I declare, upon my honour as a gentleman, that I never did pay my addresses to that lady ; that I never attempted, either openly or clandestinely, to establish myself in her affections ; and further, I have not the slightest reason to flatter myself, that in any of those assemblies in which I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Manners, any act of mine had the slightest tendency to prepossess her in my favour."

"Do you consider Sir Henry Montfort," asked the Earl, "as the author of the calumnious report?"

"I demanded his authority, my Lord," answered Fitzallan, "but he evaded the exposure by appealing to Miss Manners herself, who treated his appeal with the most silent contempt. Desirous, however, to exculpate myself wholly in the estimation of that lady, and will you allow me to add, my Lord, also in that of your daughter, who, being present, heard the villainous insinuations of Sir Henry, I requested Miss Manners to allow me an interview with her this evening, when I would take the opportunity, in justice to my own character, of entering into a full explanation of another very serious, but unfounded charge, which the Baronet promulgated against me."

"Miss Manners," said the Earl, "is now with my daughter ; and from the truly honourable and gentlemanly manner in which, Mr. Fitzallan, you appear to have acted in this affair, I will request her attendance here ; and I will retire to give you an opportunity of entering into the desired explanation with her."

"My Lord," said Fitzallan, "you confer an

honour upon me, by the very handsome and unexpected offer which you have now made me ; and so thoroughly convinced am I that there is no part of my conduct that I would not submit to be decided even by a jury of my enemies ; and, further, so keenly desirous am I to exonerate myself from any foul imputation which may have been thrown upon my character, especially in the estimation of an individual so just and honourable as your Lordship, that I will most willingly and thankfully accept the offer on one condition, which is—that your Lordship will do me the honour to be present : a favour which I would not ask on any account, if I had the most remote idea that the slightest pain would be thereby inflicted on the feelings of Miss Manners.”

“ I will most willingly subscribe to that condition,” said the Earl ; “ and it is a further proof to me, that your conduct has been regulated by the strictest principles of honour and integrity.”

Lady Amelia and Julia were sitting on the sofa, perplexing themselves with the cause of Fitzallan’s visit, and the immediate subject of his protracted interview with the Earl, when the servant entered, delivering a message, requesting the company of Miss Manners in the library.

“ Is any one with my father ?” asked Lady Amelia.

“ Mr. Fitzallan is with his Lordship,” replied the servant ; and this intelligence was no sooner communicated, than the most expressive looks passed between the two friends.

“ I’ll attend upon his Lordship immediately,” said Julia ; and the servant left the room.

“Gracious Heavens!” exclaimed Lady Amelia, “what can be the meaning of this? Oh! that I might accompany you, for this state of suspense is intolerable.”

“Never fear,” exclaimed Julia; “I augur the most agreeable results from this interview; for I am certain, that before Fitzallan leaves the house, he will so have established himself in the good opinion of the Earl, as to open a more unrestricted intercourse between us.”

“Oh, my dear Julia,” said Lady Amelia, “but do hasten back to me with all possible despatch, for every minute will be an hour to me till your return. If you meet my mother, tell her I am dressing; tell her I am the garden; tell her any thing, but do not let her come here.”

“Am I not going to meet my lover?” exclaimed Julia, with an ironical smile; “then why do I tarry here? Oh, Fitzallan! Fitzallan! my lover! my lover!”—and off she bounded.

“Dear merry girl,” said Lady Amelia, as Julia closed the door, “what should I do without thee? But how heavily fraught with misery or happiness to me is the present hour! For the future Fitzallan may be for ever estranged from me! I may see him the idol of another; but it is impossible she can understand how to love as well as I do. But there is no power existing upon the earth which shall prevent me uniting myself closer to him. No, Fitzallan! not the understanding of any existing woman shall be more fruitful, nor more rich in invention than mine, to discover the means whereby to make you still

more my own. I will weave some new rosy chains to bind you more tenderly and indissolubly to me. I will be the inventor of new magical charms, in order to destroy the blandishments which give this secret rival the superiority over me. Tell me who she is; tell me in what consists her fascination, that I may counterfeit it; tell me by what power she has succeeded in captivating you, and that power shall be mine; in vain shall you contend against me. Fly to the end of the world; conceal yourself in the deepest recesses of some uninhabited desert, your Amelia will find her way to you; and then, when weary of a toilsome, painful life, she cannot obtain from you one word of consolation to assuage her grief, then will she have at last the blessed comfort of dying at your feet."

Thus communed this beautiful girl with herself, in language such as she would wish only the spirit of her morning dreams to hear. But why, as she whispered the words, came a fleeting blush upon her cheeks? why did her bosom rise irregularly, as if under the influence of some uncontrollable power? and why at that moment could she have clasped every created thing to her heart, which could tell her that it was the offspring of love? We will not answer these questions, thou lovely one: those under the influence of thy feelings require from us no solution, and those who never knew them would, were we to give it, not understand us. Who would speak to a cold and frigid heart of the heavenly influence of love? Who would tell of its energy and power to that callous soul, which the view of beauty never warmed,

whose pulse never quickened at the glowing kiss from woman's lips, and from whose eye ne'er shot a beam of fire, when the last tremulous sigh tells that the victory is won? The love which animated the breast of Amelia was a pure and holy flame; it was her first love; and let those deny it who will, but the images of the first love are the deepest impressed, because then the ground is wholly soft and pliable; and even when a lapse of time may be supposed to have obliterated the marks, there will still always remain some faint traces behind, which carry the dreamer back to the days of other years, and with the joy of melancholy to dwell on the remembrance of the most blissful period of his existence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Siren-tongued, and fairy-footed,
Heart of bliss to beauty suited ;
The first in love, that smiled upon me,
(Ah ! early smiles, that early won me.)
This plighted heart be thine for ever,
Nor season change, nor distance sever ;
A fairer form may bend before thee,
More polish'd lips than mine adore thee ;
But ne'er can heart more truly love thee,
Sight more admire, or sense approve thee.

WHEN Julia entered the library, she found the Earl and Fitzallan in close and confidential conversation ; to her great surprise, the Countess was sitting in a recess of one of the windows, listening apparently with intense curiosity to the subject of their discourse, and, by the frown which sat on the countenance of her Ladyship, it was at once evident that Fitzallan had been divulging something not very agreeable to her feelings, or which possessed a tendency to degrade some particular individual in her good opinion. It would have been far more agreeable to Julia had the Countess been absent during her interview with Fitzallan and the Earl, for she knew not the exact purport for which her company had been requested, and therefore she might be so inadvertently taken off her guard as to excite certain

suspicious in the breast of the Countess, which might induce her Ladyship to keep a more strict and vigilant eye upon the actions of her daughter, and ultimately lead to a detection of an attachment, which, under existing circumstances, would be met with the most decided opposition, and perhaps a complete frustration of all their future hopes.

On Julia entering, Fitzallan rose, and greeted her with all the ease and familiarity of a valued acquaintance, and which was at once indicative that he was conscious to himself that he had not, by any dishonourable or unprincipled act, forfeited her good opinion; nor was there any thing conspicuous in the behaviour of Julia, which could lead a spectator to conclude that even the slightest degree of resentment resided in her breast for any previous affront that might have been offered to her.

“ I have taken the liberty, Miss Manners,” said Fitzallan, conducting her to a chair, “ to request your presence here, in order that I may stand exonerated in the opinion of your worthy friends now present, of the charge which has been brought against me, and circulated by Sir Henry Montfort, of having conducted myself towards you in a dishonourable and ungentlemanlike manner. I profess that I am not one of those who set the opinion of the world at defiance; and although I do not hold myself amenable to every one for a justification of any, or every part of my conduct; yet, as the reputation of a young man is the brightest jewel which he possesses, and which he ought, to the utmost of his power, to keep from being tarnished, I feel that I owe a duty to

myself and to those who favour me with their esteem and regard, to challenge in the present instance the severest scrutiny into my conduct, in order that I may show myself still deserving of the partiality of my friends; or, if guilty, render myself liable to their reproof and displeasure. You heard the charge which Sir Henry Montfort brought against me, particularly in reference to yourself, and you witnessed the most unjustifiable behaviour which he considered himself entitled to adopt on that occasion; will you now have the goodness to state to the Earl and Countess of Glencoe, whether there be the slightest ground for the accusation of Sir Henry, or if there be any part of my conduct observed towards you, either openly or clandestinely, of which you have any good and substantial ground of complaint. If there be, I beg of you explicitly to declare it; and I am then willing to submit to the consequences with which such behaviour ought to be visited."

"Really, Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia with a smile, "I was not aware that I was to be called before so grave an inquisitor, and to decide upon the propriety or impropriety of the conduct of a gentleman, whose society I have not had frequently the pleasure of enjoying. You stand before me as a self-accused culprit, and I suppose you mean the Earl and the Countess to constitute the jury."

"And you, Miss Manners," said Fitzallan, "to be my judge, and to pass the sentence upon me according to the extent of my demerits."

"Then, as your judge," said Julia, "I totally absolve you from all and every part of the charge,

which, as far as I am concerned, has been brought against you. I am not aware of a single act which you ever committed in reference to myself, which derogates from your character as a gentleman, possessed of the most refined and delicate feelings."

"Spare me," said Fitzallan, "any personal eulogium, for I cannot take to myself any merit for adopting a line of conduct consistent with those principles of honour and virtue in which I have been educated, and to which I look up, as the means of securing to me that rank in society which I now hold. It now only remains for me to trace the calumny to its origin; and you may rest assured, that the individual in whose malicious head it originated, shall receive from me that chastisement which he so richly deserves. There is, however, one part of my conduct on which it might be supposed that I should enter upon some explanation, especially as it was made the ground-work of my dishonourable conduct towards Miss Manners—I allude to a clandestine attachment which is supposed to exist between a lady and myself, whom I have secreted in the cottage, at which Sir Henry had the impertinence to call, as the self-elected champion of Miss Manners, and where he presumed, in his customary dictatorial manner, to set himself up as the censor of my actions, on the fallacious and untenable plea of the superiority of his station. On that particular subject, however, I must beg leave to maintain at present the greatest secrecy and silence. The time will come when every part of my conduct in that respect will be open to the world; but were I at present to divulge the secret, or

to expose the exact relations in which the unfortunate tenant of the cottage now stands, the ends of retributive justice might be frustrated, and the delinquent escape that punishment, which, I am certain, ere long will fall upon his head. It is not the suspicion that may attach to my character—it is not the sneers and scoffs with which the illiberal and uncharitable may point at me, that shall discourage or deter me from accomplishing the end which I have in view ; and although calumny and detraction may envelope me in their murky clouds, the hour will come when I shall emerge with the light of honour, integrity, and virtue around me ; the brightness of which will be in proportion to the gloom and darkness with which my enemies will be surrounded.”

“ Is it your belief, Mr. Fitzallan,” asked the Countess, who had hitherto maintained a studied silence, “ that Sir Henry, in this late conduct of his, which has excited so much animosity against him, was actuated by any sinister motive ? Individually speaking, it could not be any matter of concern to him in what manner you chose to regulate your actions ; and therefore, as he possessed no interest in them, are we not in charity bound to attribute his behaviour to a good and honourable motive, although he may have adopted rather an eccentric method in the execution of it ? ”

“ Under the present circumstances, my Lady,” said Fitzallan, “ and particularly as being honoured with this interview under your own roof, it would be highly unbecoming in me to throw any additional stigma on the character of Sir Henry Montfort, or to

enter into any explanation of those feelings, which are naturally excited in the breast of every individual who is jealous of his reputation, when he hears his character traduced by another, however high his rank and condition in life may be. In this respect, as well as in many others, I do not consider Sir Henry in any other light than as my equal; and I consider it the duty of every man, before he takes upon himself the office of interfering in the affairs of others, and to pass his condemnatory opinion upon them, to have well ascertained that the rumours in circulation, and the diffusion of which he has very officiously taken upon himself, were founded on truth. I have further always held it to be a leading principle in the affairs of life, that he who refuses to give up his authority for any scandalous report that he may choose to circulate, is himself to be considered as the author of it, and to be treated as such by the individual who is maligned. These are feelings, however, which it would ill become me to discuss in your presence, my Lady; I was accused of an action bordering almost on villainy; I was accused of deporting myself towards Miss Manners, that young lady, who enjoys the felicity of being the bosom friend of your daughter, in a manner, that, could it have been verified against me, ought to have led to my expulsion from respectable society; and, on demanding the authority for such unfounded aspersions on my character, I was treated with all the disdain and contumely of the supposed superior; in consequence thereof I took it into my own hands to obtain that redress, which, if I had not demanded, I should deem myself

unworthy to appear before you with that conscious pride, and assurance of my own rectitude, which I trust have distinguished me during our present interview. I am willing to submit my conduct to the test of the most rigid scrutiny. If I am found to have erred, I am not above apologizing for any part of my conduct which may be deemed an infraction of the rules of any of the established courtesies of life ; but, on the other hand, if I am found to be an injured individual, I shall deem myself entitled to that right of self-defence which is invested in every person, careless of the rank or station which the man so injuring me may hold in life. To you, Miss Manners, every apology is due from me in having thus, I am certain unintentionally on my part, exposed you to this unpleasant interview, but I could not suffer myself to lie under the imputation of the conduct which has been imputed to me towards you ; and if further explanation on my part be required by you, I hope you will not allow this opportunity to escape of bringing forward your accusations against me."

" I have no accusation, Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia, " to bring against you ; and I know you will credit me, when I declare that the officiousness of Sir Henry, in his pretended championship of my character, was neither desired nor sanctioned by me ; at the same time, I will confess, that in my conduct towards Sir Henry I was in no little degree actuated by a spirit of mischief, and of a disposition naturally frolicsome, to urge him on in his Quixotic expedition as my own true and gallant knight, never suspecting

that his extraordinary spirit of chivalry would have led him into his present dilemma."

"And from which," said the Earl, "I see no immediate prospect of rescuing him but with the loss of his honour."

"A person of Sir Henry's rank lose his honour!" exclaimed the Countess; "things have come to a fine pass indeed, if a man of high descent, of fortune, and of the most exalted expectations, is to lose his honour from an insignificant squabble about a pretended love affair."

"Men of rank, of fortune, and of ducal expectations," said the Earl, very drily, "have lost their honour on subjects of still less trivial import. No man has a right, whether duke, lord, or baronet, to give an offence without he is prepared to take the consequences of it."

"It is not my wish," said Fitzallan, in the mildest possible tone, "to be the instrument of the prolongation of this dispute. It will give me no little pleasure to know that I have justified myself in the opinion of those whose esteem and regard I shall be always proud to acknowledge; at the same time that I carry with me the consciousness, that in no instance of my life was I ever the aggressor, or the wilful destroyer of another's happiness. You will now allow me, I hope, to take my leave."

"Not so," said the Earl; "you and I must be better acquainted. I am certain, when the Countess examines this affair impartially, she will eventually acknowledge that the conduct of Sir Henry has been highly indiscreet, not to call it by a harsher

name; and our only aim ought now to be, to prevent the publicity of the affair being more extended."

"Dear o' me," said the Countess, in rather a sneering tone, "as if the most extended publicity could detract from the character of Sir Henry Montfort; his rank and title will always prove to him a passport through the world."

"So they may," said the Earl, "with empty and superficial thinkers; but from the moment that I had the misfortune to become an Earl, I have endeavoured to ascertain in what the advantage of it lies; and I find that I am placed a few staves higher on the ladder of human society, and consequently I am told that I am to look down with contempt upon those who are on the staves beneath me, and that being placed by Providence on the summit of prosperity, I am to be so intoxicated with my grandeur as to convert that prosperity into a right of extinguishing every sentiment of humanity."

"How strange it is, my Lord," said the Countess, "that I cannot eradicate from your mind these plebeian principles. A proper deference is, and ever will be paid in this world to rank; and in the case of Sir Henry Montfort, whom I shortly hope to call my son-in-law—"

"Humph!" ejaculated the Earl, playing with his watch-chain; "I rather think he must alter his conduct before that event takes place."

"How! what!" exclaimed the Countess, rising from her chair; "and is this paltry insignificant squabble —"

"In which your future son-in-law," said the Earl, very coolly, "has lost his honour."

"I repeat it," said the Countess; "can this paltry affair have had such an influence over you, my Lord, as to induce you to throw any obstacles in the way of the proposed union of our daughter with a person of such an ancient family, and of such unsullied character as Sir Henry Montfort?"

"And who has suffered himself," said the Earl, with an assumed indifference, "to be horsewhipped in the public streets."

"Horsewhipped!" exclaimed the Countess; "Sir Henry Montfort horsewhipped! I should like to see the individual, either his superior or inferior, who would presume to commit such an indignity upon him."

"You see, my Lady," said Fitzallan, with the greatest courtesy, "you see that individual now before you. I shrink not from the avowal; on the contrary, I pride myself upon it. I did horsewhip Sir Henry Montfort, and will again until he retracts his scandalous falsehoods respecting me."

"You have thereby, Mr. Fitzallan," said the Countess, "brought a degradation upon this family, which must and shall be wiped away. I will immediately see Sir Henry Montfort on the subject, and measures shall be taken for his complete justification. Well, this comes all of your march of intellect, or, what some fools call it, of the schoolmaster being abroad. A pretty preceptorship indeed! to teach inferiors to horsewhip their superiors. Why, the aristocracy of this country will soon only be worth

as much as it is in the Cannibal Islands, where an individual is estimated according to his bulk and size, not according to his genealogical tree, or the antiquity of his descent."

"No, my Lady," said the Earl, "it is only in civilized countries, where emptiness of rank is made the stalking-horse for a few select to ride rough shod over the better portion of their fellow-creatures."

Fitzallan rose from his chair, and addressing himself to the Earl, said, "It becomes me not, after the turn which this interview has now taken, to protract my stay any longer. I came hither in consequence of your express invitation, and I shall deem myself fortunate if I have eradicated from your mind any evil impression, which the calumnious disposition of Sir Henry Montfort may have made upon it. Further, I shall hold myself particularly happy, if, in regard to you, Miss Manners, the friendly intercourse which has hitherto subsisted between us may be re-established on its former footing, in despite of the attempts which have been so insidiously made to interrupt it."

"Having not the slightest ground of complaint against you, Mr. Fitzallan," said Julia, "you will ever be received by my family circle with the same cordial welcome which it has hitherto been our study to give you. Allow me, however, to say one word in extenuation of the conduct of Sir Henry Montfort; which is, that I believe he has been wilfully and designedly imposed upon by certain individuals, to effect some villainous purpose of their own; and that they selected him in particular, from the knowledge which

they possessed of his credulous disposition, and his ungovernable propensity to interfere in the affairs of other people ; but that, in regard to yourself personally, he could not have been actuated by any hostile or resentful feeling."

" Very true, my dear Julia," exclaimed the Countess, who was delighted to hear these exculpatory expressions, so conducive to the restoration of the tranquillity which had hitherto distinguished the family of the Glencoes ; " true, I must say, that I think the conduct of Sir Henry has been canvassed with too much severity, and that not the slightest allowance has been made for those little weaknesses and foibles, which are more or less inseparable from every character."

" Will you allow me to say, my Lady," said Fitzallan, " that the step from a weakness to a vice is so indistinct, that it is sometimes very difficult to determine to which of the two any particular action ought to be attributed ; but I consider, according to the acknowledged institutions of society, that when an individual, without any previous provocation, wilfully commits a trespass upon the character and happiness of another, he is bound to make every compensation for the injury which he has committed ; and that if he, under the principle of common justice, refuses to make that reparation, an appeal to the most summary method of obtaining satisfaction is not only justifiable, but is actually imperative upon the injured party. Sir Henry has it still in his power to retrace his steps ; and although he can never wholly purify himself from the dis-

honour which his cowardice has entailed upon him, he may still so far acknowledge his error, as wholly to obliterate that stain from a character which his unjustifiable officiousness has attempted to cast upon it. I would tread out of my path to avoid the systematic slanderer, as I would some venomous reptile which comes upon me unawares, and stings me in the moment when I least expect it!"

At this moment an angry voice was heard in the vestibule, exclaiming, "Where is the Earl? where is the Countess? where is Lady Amelia? a man of my rank to be thus insulted!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Countess, hastening towards the door, "it is the Baronet's voice. Oh dear! oh dear! we shall certainly have bloodshed. Oh! how very unfortunate."

"No fear, no fear!" exclaimed the Earl; "I'll be the guarantee that there will be no bloodshed on one side."

Lady Amelia, who had heard the bustle from an adjoining room, hastened into the vestibule; and it may have been surmised by some ill-disposed, illiberal spirits, that she presented herself on that occasion, not so much on account of any sympathy which she might have felt for her future husband in his dolorous plight, but actually to catch a glimpse of him, whom of all others in the world she wished to be her husband, but from whom fate had separated her, like two parallel lines which, although they may stretch away into infinity, never can meet.

The Countess rushed from the library at the same moment that her daughter presented herself in the

vestibule, where they found the Baronet completely out of breath, and under a paroxysm of rage, which portended inevitable destruction to any inimical object which might unfortunately come in his way. "My dear Lady Amelia!" he exclaimed, taking hold of one of her hands; "my dear Countess," he cried, also taking her by the hand, "did you ever hear of such an act of atrocity as has been committed upon my person by that low, vulgar, illiterate, plebeian fellow, Fitzallan. Oh! if I could but now meet with him, I am certain that I should annihilate him; I should so disfigure his poor effeminate form, that it should bear scarcely any resemblance to aught that is human; I should completely pulverize him."

"My dear Sir Henry," said the Countess, "do compose yourself; it is true you may have suffered an indignity."

"Yes, your Ladyship," cried the Baronet, flushed with passion, "I have suffered a very gross indignity; but the fellow took to his heels, or I would have shown him that a man of my rank is not to be so treated with impunity. The cowardly fellow—to run away—but I was wisely advised by some of the spectators not to pursue him, but to treat him with every mark of contempt and indignation."

"Oh! Sir Henry," exclaimed Lady Amelia, "what disaster is it that has befallen you? what can Mr. Fitzallan possibly have done thus to excite the ebullition of your rage?"

"Done! Lady Amelia," exclaimed the Baronet, "why his very name is branded with infamy for the act, the very boys will hoot at him in the streets,

and the fishwomen will pelt him with their offal for the unexampled affront which he has committed upon a person of my rank ; and all this comes, my dear Amelia, for my generous and disinterested efforts in protecting your friend from his vile and accursed plots against her character."

" But in what manner," asked Lady Amelia, " has Mr. Fitzallan committed an indignity upon your person, Sir Henry ?"

" Has he not horsewhipped me, my dear Amelia ? horsewhipped me in the public streets, when I was totally defenceless ; has he not taken the advantage of my unprotected state to use his whip upon me as if I were an ass ?"

" Oh ! my dear Sir Henry," ejaculated the Countess, " who could ever take a man of your rank for an ass ?"

" But he treated me as such," said the Baronet ; " and then, to finish the scene, to be wedged in, on a narrow staircase with that prowling human biped of scandal, Mrs. Doe, the attorney's wife, who had heard that the town was all in mourning for me ; that I had been bled, blistered, and was covered with bruises. Is it not monstrous, my dear Amelia ; and only think, if the fellow had killed me, as Mrs. Doe informed me was the general report throughout the town—Oh ! what would then have been your situation ?"

" Oh !" said Lady Amelia, " let us, however, rejoice that this untoward affair has not terminated fatally."

" But where is the Earl," exclaimed the Baronet

making his way towards the library, "I am come hither to consult him as to the manner in which this assault on my person is to be avenged. Are there no laws which will protect a man of my rank from being attacked in the open street, by any audacious ragamuffin, who may take it into his head that I have offended his dunghill pride, or exposed the iniquity of his actions? The inflated fool may conceive that it was a want of spirit which prevented me from punishing him on the spot, but that is wholly out of the question; and I am certain, my dear Amelia, I should be unworthy of you, if I did not resent any act which was likely to place my honour in jeopardy."

"Indeed you would," said Lady Amelia; "but as the affair is of a private nature between Mr. Fitzallan and yourself, it were, perhaps, as well, to spare my father the disagreeable alternative of interfering on either side."

"What!" exclaimed the Baronet, "your father not interfere on my account, not to espouse my cause in a case of this description! not to assist a man of my rank, and imbued with the spirit congenial with that rank! I only want an opportunity to punish the fellow for his atrocious conduct; and he shall feel how boldly a man of my rank can defend himself from the dastardly attack of an insignificant plebeian. Were he but now here, you should have a specimen of how a man of rank can deport himself, when a wound has been inflicted upon his honour."

At this moment, the library door opened, and Fitzallan presented himself in company with the Earl and Julia, and the Baronet no sooner caught a

glimpse of his antagonist with the same weapon in his hand with which he had so liberally chastised him, than in his imagination he beheld a repetition of the scene, and he very promptly yielded to the entreaty of the Countess, to retire with her into an adjoining room, and not to think of putting his threats into execution ; as, under his present state of excitement, the most serious consequences might be the result. To the Baronet, however, the sudden appearance of Fitzallan in a quarter where of all others he was the least expected to be seen, was a circumstance of the most mortifying description ;—had some horrid sprite broken loose from the domdaniel caves, it could not have shot a greater trepidation into his soul ; a tremor came over his whole frame, and he cast a look upon Fitzallan, in which humiliated pride and the most resentful indignation strove for the mastery. Fitzallan now passed closely to him, and after bowing in the most respectful and formal manner to Lady Amelia, who returned it with the same spirit, he briefly addressed himself to Sir Henry, saying, “ The company, Sir Henry, in which you now are, and the roof under which I find you, must, consistently with the manners of a gentleman, protect you from any offensive acts on my part. I hope you will profit by the advice which the Earl will give you, and take the earliest steps towards the retrieving of your character, which you have now so grossly forfeited. For myself, I shall not condescend to enter into any further personal altercation with you. I have made the Earl acquainted with every particular respecting our late rencontre, and if there be any part

of my conduct which yet calls for an explanation, I shall always be most ready to give it to any person, on whose regard and esteem I attach the slightest value."

To this appeal of Fitzallan, Sir Henry deigned not to make any reply, but taking the Countess under one arm and Lady Amelia under the other, he very disdainfully retreated into the room, at the entrance of which Lady Amelia turned her head aside, and directing her look to the spot where Fitzallan was standing in conversation with the Earl, blessed him with such a smile, that in one moment repaid him for all the troubles he had lately endured ; for it told him that he had not forfeited the place which he held in her esteem, and that if any displeasure towards him had ever existed in her breast, in consequence of the calumniating insinuations of the Baronet, it was now entirely removed. Taking a most friendly leave of Julia and the Earl, from the latter of whom he received the assurance, that it would be highly agreeable to him if their intimacy were extended, Fitzallan left the house congratulating himself on the general result of his interview.

CHAPTER XIX.

Tell me, daughter Juliet,
How stands your disposition to be married?

* * * * *
Oh! she says nothing, but weeps and weeps.

ON the arrival of Fitzallan at home, he was informed that a stranger had called upon him, as if just arrived from a long journey, but who refused to disclose the import of his visit to Mr. Bode, or to any of the domestics of the establishment. Fitzallan immediately suspected that the stranger was intrusted with some commission from his mother, whose late motions had been attended with so much secrecy and mystery, as totally to baffle all conjecture as to what might be the ultimate end of her designs. To several of his letters expressing his intention to pay her an early visit, an immediate reply was sent, requesting him to defer it to some future day, the period of which was however never fixed; intimating, at the same time, that family affairs required her immediate presence in some distant part of the country, but of the exact nature of which, or with whom they were to be transacted, not the slightest information was given. To the inquiries which Fitzallan made in regard to

the dubious existence of his father, the most peremptory injunction was returned, that under existing circumstances, she was not at liberty to enter into any further disclosure, than a repetition of the assurance, that his father was dead, and therefore, her desire further intimated, that her feelings might not be harassed by a revival of the question. In one of the last letters, however, received from his mother, she rather darkly insinuated, that he would shortly receive from her some information of an interesting nature, but that any attempt on his part to expedite it, would be productive of a wholly contrary effect. When, therefore, Fitzallan was informed that a stranger had called upon him, and under circumstances of rather a mysterious nature, the pleasing hope arose in his breast, that a stranger had been despatched by his mother with the promised information, and his anxiety was unbounded for the arrival of the hour at which the stranger promised that he would call again.

Fitzallan was sitting at the window, observing every individual that passed by with the most scrutinizing eye, hoping to discover the stranger in his travelling dress, who might answer to the character which had been given of him, when Mr. Bode entered, delivering to him a letter which had been left by some unknown hand, but with the injunction that it was to be delivered immediately. The letter was evidently written in a feigned hand, and ran as follows :

“TO HIM WHO WILL UNDERSTAND IT,

“Let no assurance induce you to believe that your father is dead. Be upon your guard with a stranger, who is secretly employed to watch your actions. Be not too communicative to him, and place little confidence in the intelligence which he brings you. Treat him as you would your enemy, and if you value your future happiness, let no one see the contents of this letter.

“AMICUS.”

Fitzallan having perused this extraordinary note, examined it in the minutest manner, with the hope of detecting the handwriting, but after comparing it with every one with which he was acquainted, he could not trace the slightest resemblance with any one, and then he began to discuss within himself, as to the manner in which he should deport himself towards the stranger, and whether, as the letter was anonymous, it was deserving of the slightest attention on his part. Still, however, there was a sufficiency in the letter to lead him to suppose that the individual who wrote it, was in some degree privy to the mysterious situation in which he stood respecting his father; and a suspicion darted across his mind whether the whole was not a contrivance of his mother to mislead him in those points on which the mystery of her own life appeared to be founded. His own penetration was sufficient to convince him, that whoever the parties might be who were implicated

in his future destiny, they were in a state of discord with each other, and that their chief design appeared to be to circumvent each other in their respective plans.

In the midst of these reflections, the stranger was announced, and on entering the room, the surprise of Fitzallan was boundless when he discovered in him the same individual who had pretended to be the bearer of intelligence from his father in America, and who now introduced himself to him as the agent of Lord Dufresne, to whom Fitzallan had written an expostulatory letter respecting the conduct which ought to be pursued by his son, the Hon. Mr. Monckton, towards his unfortunate victim, the daughter of Arnfeld.

"You and I have seen each other before," said Fitzallan, after the customary salutations had passed between them, "therefore, we are no direct strangers to each other. What news do you now bring me respecting my father? does he, or does he not live?"

"Excuse me, Sir," said the stranger, "that is a topic upon which I am not now commissioned to converse with you; therefore, no reliance can be placed upon any information that I can give you, for having had no further transactions with the parties, I profess myself ignorant of their motions."

"Then you *once* had transactions with them," asked Fitzallan, most significantly, "if so, you are enabled now to tell me what those transactions were, and also the particular individuals with whom you were connected with them. Was my father one of them?"

"I assure you, Sir," said the stranger, rather haughtily, "I have not paid you this visit with the intention of discussing any family matter with you, but so far will I deviate from the path prescribed to me, that I will not hesitate to repeat to you my former statement, that your father is in existence."

"And where?" asked Fitzallan.

"I possess not the power of omniscience," said the stranger, "therefore, I cannot answer your question; but to the purport of my visit."

"Proceed," said Fitzallan, who eyed him as if he would penetrate into the very nucleus of his heart: "I feel myself in a state of torment with this opaque veil of mystery which is attempted to be thrown around me; and I know not who possesses the right, if my parents do not choose to show themselves to me as such, to throw a restraint over, or to question the propriety or impropriety of my actions. If independence be mine, let me enjoy the advantages of it; on the contrary, if I am to be considered as the slave of another, let me know who it is that exacts obedience from me, that I may have the option whether I will or will not submit to it."

"Young man," said the stranger, "I pardon this ebullition of a youthful temperament; you see before you an individual who has witnessed human life in all its vicissitudes; who has known the height of opulence and the depths of misery, who from various situations has viewed the moving panorama of human life, and who has wished himself in a solitude, that he might not see its atrocities. I appear before you, I acknowledge, in the unwelcome guise of mys-

tery, and I can easily conceive that certain suspicions will naturally arise in your breast, which must choke every germ of confidence which might otherwise take its root within it ; but the time will come, and it is not far distant, when a light will burst upon you from a quarter, where at present rest all darkness, gloom, and mystery, and where in the hoary decrepitude of my age, you may grasp my withered hand, and as the coldness of death creeps upon it, press it with all the warmth of—I was going to say, of affection ; but, let me say, of heartfelt gratitude.”

“ How,” said Fitzallan to himself, “ am I to reconcile such sentiments as these with the warning contained in the letter ; I am made the sport of some wayward destiny, and yield to it I must.”

“ Now listen to me,” continued the stranger. “ There are eyes which watch your actions although you see them not ; there are steps which dog your motions in the sunshine of the day, and the darkness of the night, although you hear them not ; there is a voice which would warn you from the precipice on which you are now standing ; but that voice dares not make itself heard ; it is as the stifled voice of the mother, who sees her infant standing on the brink of a precipice, and dares not call to it, for fear the exclamation of alarm should frighten it into the abyss below. It may appear paradoxical to you, and so it will also to the mere tyro in the world, but when virtue is carried to an excess, it partakes of the nature of vice ; it is the fault of youth to run into that excess, and no one is more guilty of that fault than yourself. You lately wrote a letter to Lord Dufresne,

calling upon him to interfere in a most disreputable affair between his son, Mr. Monckton, and the daughter of a retired officer of the name of Arnfeld."

"I acknowledge I did write that letter," said Fitzallan, confounded with surprise; "and can that be deemed a fault in me?"

"Not exactly a fault," said the stranger; "but I am deputed hither by Lord Dufresne with an answer to that letter."

"I hope it is satisfactory," said Fitzallan; "pray deliver it," tendering out his hand to receive it.

"It is a verbal one," said the stranger, "and, perhaps, you may regard it as an authoritative one; but the reason will be one day explained to you. It is the express order of Lord Dufresne, that you desist from this moment from all interference in the affair to which you allude in your letter."

"I am not disposed," said Fitzallan, "to obey the order of any individual which goes to counteract my endeavours to obtain redress for the greatest injury which one of the opposite sex can receive from ours, and especially, when I am not aware of any existing tie, relation, or connexion, which is imperative upon me to pay obedience to that order, or which invests the individual with a right to issue it. Does Lord Dufresne send me word that he will force his profligate son to repair the injury which he has inflicted? Has he invested you with instructions to restore peace and serenity to the maddened spirit of a broken-hearted father? to mitigate the ardour of the fire which is consuming his brain, and to give him at last the pillow of a placid death? has he done one or all of these things,

and I will conduct the victim of his son's libertinism to the asylum which has been provided for her. I will instantly search out the distracted father, that is, if his misery has not already given him a grave; and I will lead him to where his discarded daughter is now in the depth of her disconsolate condition weeping over the inanimate form of her child, the offspring of her unhallowed love, and praying to be with it the joint tenant of a grave. Tell me now, if I obey the order of Lord Dufresne, and abandon the cause of the hapless victim of his son's deliberate profligacy, whether you have any authority from him to take the most prompt measures to render immediate justice to the injured parties, and to make the delinquent feel the enormity of his crime?"

"I acknowledge," said the stranger, "that I am not invested by Lord Dufresne with any of the powers you mention, nor am I so far in his confidence as to disclose to you the line of conduct which he intends to pursue in the business; my sole commission is to put a negative by Lord Dufresne upon any further interference on your part, as far as regards Mr. Monckton; and further, that you will abstain from all acts of personal violence towards him."

"Indeed!" said Fitzallan, "then you will have the goodness to convey this message back to his Lordship, that before he assumes to himself the privilege of controlling my actions, he must first show me on what basis that privilege is founded. It is not his mere title that can invest him with such a right; and, therefore, not being accustomed to pay submis-

sion where none is due, I shall continue to act according to the dictates of my own principles, without stopping to consult how far those principles, in the fullest exercise of them, may meet with the concurrence or approbation of any other individual. You will also allow me to say, that I do not consider myself as treated by Lord Dufresne with that courtesy which is due to me. I wrote to his Lordship on a subject in which the character of his heir was at issue, with all the respect due to his rank and dignity, and I consider it contrary to the commonest rules of politeness, to return a verbal answer to a written communication. If, therefore, his Lordship considers me as so far beneath him as to be undeserving of that common act of courtesy, I must, in return, inform him, that I shall persevere in my most strenuous endeavours to bring his profligate son to some sense of compunction for the injury which he has inflicted on a worthy, and, before the serpent crept into their habitation, a happy family; and if neither expostulation, entreaty, nor a sense of honour can induce him to make the reparation required, I know of *one* step," and in pronouncing that sentence, Fitzallan shot a most expressive look upon the stranger, "by which he shall be compelled to it."

"Your behaviour on this occasion," said the stranger, "has fully verified the suspicions of Lord Dufresne. He is by no means ignorant of your character, and in the supposition that his injunction upon you, in regard to your conduct towards his son, might, as I have now experienced, meet with a de-

cided repulse, he has commissioned me to deliver to you this letter from your mother."

"A letter from my mother!" exclaimed Fitzallan, overcome with surprise, "I knew not that my mother was acquainted with Lord Dufresne; and how is it that his Lordship has obtained access to her in so short a time, for by the last accounts received from her, she was in a wholly different part of the country?"

"It is out of my power," said the stranger, "to answer those questions; you of course must be better acquainted with your mother's actions than I can possibly be expected to be."

Fitzallan opened his mother's letter, and read as follows :

"MY DEAR HECTOR,

"The gloom which appears to weigh so heavily upon your future prospects is fast dispersing; but seek not to hasten it before its time. One indiscreet act on your part, in contradiction to the counsel of your mother and your friend, may plunge you into a dilemma from which no after exertion can rescue you. Look upon yourself as a vessel under the guidance of a hidden pilot, who will eventually steer you safely into the harbour of happiness: but if you pretend to take the helm into your own hands, under the presumptuous idea of the possession of superior skill, the fortune of your future life is wrecked for ever. If, however, you value the peace of your unfortunate mother, who, after having passed through every grade of misery, now first beholds the star of

her happiness ascending, you will follow the counsels which she now gives you. I enjoin you at no future period, either by personal communication or by epistolary correspondence, to require from me any explanation of the reason which has now actuated me to interfere on the subject of a letter which you have written to Lord Dufresne; the purport of that letter, I hesitate not to acknowledge, has been communicated to me, and whatever may be my private sentiments of the manner in which you have conducted yourself on the occasion which gave rise to your epistle, I now enjoin you, if you entertain the slightest affection for your mother, if you wish not to see every avenue closed to the establishment of her future happiness, to desist from all further interference in the affair of Mr. Monckton and the victim of his unbridled passions. You may heap conjecture upon conjecture as to the cause which may have prompted me to impose upon you this injunction, but the deeper you penetrate, the further you will be from the truth. Start not at the words which I am now about to transcribe; but, with the most solemn appeal to heaven, I swear it to you, that your mother's life in a great degree depends upon your strict obedience to the injunction which she now imposes upon you. On that obedience hangs the weal or woe of many who to you are unknown; or, if known, whose secret relations exclude you from all active interest in their behalf. Had you ever known your father, I would now invoke his spirit to join with me in my remonstrance to deter you from the line of conduct which you are now pursuing, and to induce you to desist from any further

annoyance to Mr. Monckton, and, consequently, to the family to which he belongs.

“ Your truly affectionate mother,

“ E. FITZALLAN.”

The perusal of this letter plunged Fitzallan into a conflict of conjectures, of doubt, and suspicion, which had never before assailed his mind; and he stood actually before the stranger, as if the horn of Oberon had worked its influence upon him, the resemblance more of a statue than of a living being.

“ Now, young man,” said the stranger, with an assumed air of dignity, “ what answer shall I convey to my employer? In regard to your mother, I leave the question between you and her to be decided by your own filial feelings.”

“ I hesitate not to declare,” said Fitzallan, “ that in regard to the imperative order of Lord Dufresne, I should not hesitate a moment in refusing to obey it, and educated as I have been in the inflexible and uncompromising principles of honour and integrity, I cannot at this moment bring myself to recede from the task which I have imposed upon myself, of avenging the wrongs which an amiable female has sustained, even though ordered to refrain by the injunction of my parent. It is not only possible, but highly probable, that the feelings of my mother may have been worked upon by a specious statement of the affair, and she may thereby have unknowingly lent herself to espouse the cause of an individual, whose conduct ought to be execrated by every feeling and generous mind.”

“ I came not hither,” said the stranger, “ to discuss with you the propriety or impropriety of the conduct which any of the interested parties may have chosen to adopt. What answer am I to bear to your mother ?”

“ Then,” said Fitzallan,” eagerly seizing the advantage which this incautious speech of the stranger gave him, “ as you are to be the bearer of my answer to my mother, you are consequently able to inform me where she is.”

“ Ah !” said the stranger, with a smile, “ do you imagine that the hairs of my head have now been whitening for the last sixty years to be outwitted by an almost beardless youth ? Your answer to your mother will be conveyed through a channel, of which I am utterly ignorant. As an agent I can only execute the commission with which I have been intrusted, considering that I am not liable to enter into discussion on any collateral points, or to divulge any particulars, which might prove to be at variance with the interests of my employers.”

“ You can perhaps, however, entertain no objection to answer me one question. Does any intimacy exist between Lord Dufresne and my mother, or have you ever seen her the inmate of his Lordship’s house ?”

“ Two questions,” said the stranger, “ which convince me that you have formed a very erroneous opinion of my character. Secrecy becomes on all points the confidential agent ; but without pretending to know the tenour of your mother’s letter, I will so far trespass the bounds of my instructions, as to de-

clare that I know your mother to be particularly interested in your refraining from all further interference in Mr. Monckton's affair; and that if you persist in your present intentions, the consequence to her, and I will add, to yourself, may be of the most serious nature."

"Excuse me the question," said Fitzallan, "which I am now going to put to you."

"No more questions," exclaimed the stranger, moving towards the door.

"Have I not the honour," said Fitzallan, "of speaking to Lord Dufresne himself?"

"Who, or what I am," said the stranger, "time will show; but I will now use a peremptory tone. Obey the injunction of your mother, or your eyes have seen her for the last time in this world."

"Mysterious man!" said Fitzallan, "your every word has convinced me that you stand in some close relation with my mother, and I look upon myself as the sport of some inflexible destiny, against which it is madness in me to contend. Tell my mother, however, to have some compassion upon me, and not to throw a restraint upon my actions, where virtue, integrity, and honour are their leading principles."

"Ere long you will see me again," said the stranger, "and when you least expect it. Be prudent, be circumspect; follow the advice of those, who, although they appear before you in the suspicious garb of mystery, and consequently of distrust, are still working in secret for your future interests; and who, like some invisible spirits, are in constant attendance upon your steps, to warn you of any

danger into which the imprudence or impetuosity of youth may impel you. I charge you, however, with one injunction :—make no inquiry after me ; let not a syllable of this interview be communicated to Mr. Monckton ; and in the fulfilment of that injunction, you will find your own interests promoted. Farewell.”

The stranger hastily closed the door after him, and left Fitzallan a prey to the most conflicting conjectures. The conduct of his mother now appeared to him deeper involved in mystery than heretofore ; and although he racked his ingenuity to the utmost to discover in what manner the affair of Monckton and Arnfeld’s daughter could operate upon his future happiness, or in what particular it could have that serious reference to his mother, as almost to implicate her life ; yet, after viewing it through every possible medium, after calling to his aid every relation in which he knew his mother formerly stood ; after submitting every action in which he knew that his mother was ever engaged to the most rigid scrutiny, and tracing it through all its ramifications, he could not discover a single clue to guide him through the labyrinth in which he found himself entangled ; on the contrary, the more he essayed to discover a glimpse of light, the deeper did the darkness increase around him. This unexpected interview with the stranger led however to one resolve, which was, that he would, as soon as he could arrange his affairs, take his leave of the town, in which he had learned to know one object, who had called into action the first affections of his heart, but from whose society he

was soon to be estranged for ever as the acknowledged wife of another. That tie being broken, he had little to bind him to his present place of residence; and he hoped in the retirement of his mother's mansion, and in the pursuits of elegant literature, to distract his mind from the remembrance of those scenes, which had formed the happiness of his early days. There was, also, another reason which induced him to carry that resolve into almost immediate execution, and that was the declining health of his estimable friend and tutor, Mr. Bode. For a length of time the traces of a mortal disease had been unfortunately too apparent, to escape even the detection of those, who were continually about his person, and the only chance of relief which his physicians held out to him was a change of air, and a removal to those scenes, where the mind, in the contemplation of their beauty, might be relieved from that dull uniformity and insipidity, which are ever the attendants on a town residence.

The truth must not be disguised, that although Fitzallan had not by any direct personal conduct in the least diminished the high regard which Mr. Bode had ever entertained for him, yet the peculiarity in the circumstances under which he was placed, the mysterious conduct of his mother, his attachment to Lady Amelia Fortescue, and his late affair with Sir Henry Montfort, all of which he had not attempted to keep concealed from Mr. Bode, and which naturally tended to augment the responsibility which was attached to his situation, had preyed considerably on his mental spirits, and frequently urged him to solicit

his dismissal from a situation, in which he saw, if he retained it much longer, he might be implicated in some very unpleasant proceedings, and for which the blame might be imputed to himself. In regard to his dismissal, his request was always met with the most decided opposition ; and the last time in which it was tendered, the refusal to accept of it was accompanied with a legal instrument by Mrs. Fitzallan, securing to him the annuity of five hundred pounds, on condition that he would remain as the friend and adviser of her son, until such circumstances took place which would place him in that condition of life to which he was born. In regard, however, to any control which Mr. Bode possessed over his youthful charge, there appeared in the character of Fitzallan such a decided disposition to act for himself, independently of all foreign interference or control, that, in many instances, he listened with the most profound attention to the advice and admonitions of his friend, acknowledged the justice and prudence of the step which was proposed, and then in a few moments afterwards acted in direct opposition to it. It was natural to suppose that Mr. Bode was no sooner informed of the purport of the stranger's visit, and the imperative injunction conveyed to Fitzallan through that medium from his mother, than he used his most strenuous efforts to confirm him in the duty which he owed to a very indulgent parent, and induce him to desist momentarily from all further interference in the very unpleasant business, which, although the cause was not exactly known, had excited so particularly the attention of his mother.

Various are the ways in which the philosopher attempts to account for the actions of an individual, and equally various are the blunders which the said philosopher commits in the decisions which he makes. According to what particular rule the philosopher would have judged of the character of Fitzallan, from the line of conduct which he pursued, in consequence of the injunction of his mother, backed by the powerful advice and influence of Mr. Bode, must ever remain one of those problems which no mathematician can ever solve ; in some measure, however, it must be attributed to the total absence of mind in which Fitzallan was plunged during the whole of the admonitory lessons of Mr. Bode ; and that, although apparently he was attentively listening to every word, his thoughts were so far wandering to other subjects, that not one single word which Mr. Bode uttered made any sensible impression on his ear ; from which it followed that, at the termination of the lecture, he was almost as ignorant of the real intent of the words which Mr. Bode had uttered as an Irish Catholic is of the language in which his prayers are doled out to him from the mouth of his priest.

Dissatisfied with himself, at variance with every thing around him, quarrelling with every boy, who inadvertently pushed against him, and kicking every dog that crossed him in his path, as he pursued a kind of diagonal course down the street, blaming the sun for giving too much light, and the moon for giving too little, Fitzallan determined, although it was nearly night, to take an excursive walk amidst some of his most favourite scenes ; and so little are the re-

solves of a man under the tone of mind in which Fitzallan then was to be relied upon, that, on a sudden, finding himself at the entrance of the theatre, he suddenly changed his mind, and being then sick of the world in reality, he wished to confirm himself in that idea, by seeing it in effigy. On his entrance the house was but very scantily occupied, and he was seated very unsociably in a box by himself, listening to the beautiful adagio movement in the overture to *Der Freischütz*, when the door of the adjoining box opened, and Sir Henry Montfort presented himself, handing in the Countess of Glencoe, Lady Amelia Fortescue, and Julia Manners. If a degree of embarrassment sat upon the behaviour of Fitzallan, on viewing the only object on earth whom he loved so unexpectedly in his presence, how much greater was the confusion which displayed itself in the blushes of Lady Amelia, when her look met that of Fitzallan, at the same time that with that look there was intermingled that matchless expression of the female eye, which speaks of alarm when a beloved object is in danger. In the conduct of Sir Henry, on observing his hated antagonist so near to him, there shone all the hauteur and offended pride of the consequential nobleman; for on his brow sat the deep scowl of scorn, and the uptossed lip spoke the contempt which he entertained for one so much his inferior. It was also evident to Fitzallan, from the demeanour of the Countess, that she participated strongly in the feelings of her future son-in-law, for it was marked with all the stiffness and formality of the individual, who has some cause to repudiate a former acquaintance, and yet whom

the common courtesies of life oblige you to acknowledge. The situation of Fitzallan was one of extreme poignancy ; to enter into any familiar intercourse with either Lady Amelia or Miss Manners might expose him to an immediate altercation with their haughty companion ; to desist from it altogether might subject him to the imputation of pusillanimity, or of a departure from the established rules of common politeness. In this moment of irresolution, in this disheartening conflict between love and pride, in which on the one side all the noblest feelings of human nature were arrayed ; and on the other, it must be confessed, some of its darkest passions, as if by one of those strange coincidences, which act sometimes with such a powerful influence on the life of man, appearing like the inspirations of some supernatural beings, the band struck up the very air which Fitzallan had played to Amelia on the night of their first meeting, and which, in the sunny hours of her secret love, she had played o'er and o'er again, bringing to her imagination the form of him from whom she first had heard them. Among the various associations which bring back to the memory the scenes of former days, perhaps there is no one more powerful than some almost forgotten song, which, on a sudden striking upon the ear, opens every cell in which remembrance slept, and before us start again the lineaments of those from whose lips we may first have heard them, and perhaps in that most trying of all moments, when the face was obliged to put on the semblance of gaiety, whilst within the heart was breaking. And if those in whose presence we

first heard those airs are, as it were, now dead to us ; if an implacable destiny has torn us from them, never, never again to meet—oh ! then how welcome is the sound which brings their images back to us, in every chord of which we think we hear the voice of one whom once we loved, and a tear then starts into our eye, as if we heard the expiring tone of a solemn requiem to the faultless spirit of a child beloved. There are sounds that in our youthful days we have heard, which even now, when human villainy and treachery have done their utmost to cauterize our heart against every gentle feeling which once our nature owned, that were we now again to hear them, in that same moment would flash before us scenes, and forms, and images, which gave to our life its happiness, and the separation from which gave to our life its misery.

By what power of sympathy it was effected, that the first sounds of the well-known air had no sooner reached the ears of Lady Amelia and Fitzallan, than their looks, as if involuntarily, met each other, must be left to the decision of individuals deeper versed in the operations of the human heart than we profess to be. But if a ray of light can be analyzed by the power of the prism, telling its component colours, why exists there not some equally forcible power, which can declare to us all the feelings, which a woman's look expresses ? It is said to be a language intelligible to all, and for the understanding of which no other preceptress is necessary than nature herself ; it is in itself innate and intuitive, and he who requires

a vocabulary to define it, must be himself a specimen of nature's bungling.

It is said, that when a beam of light mingles with its sister beam in their creative spirit, a double effulgence is produced. The ray that shot from Amelia's eye, and mingled with that from Fitzallan's, in their concentrated force, penetrated to the heart of the former, and there distilled, drew forth a pearl, which rising to the eye, glittered there a tear, which, trembling for a moment in the eye-lash, trickled down the cheek; and that for which Fitzallan would have given a monarch's crown, fell unnoticed on the ground. A glance of the eye directed by love has ere now decided the fate of an empire; but if that glance had been accompanied with a tear, where is the power on earth that could withstand it? It was the first tear that Fitzallan could say to himself—it is for me that it is shed; and at that moment there was no emprise too great for him, no danger that he would not have encountered, if hope had whispered to him, that the being who had shed that tear was by Heaven destined to be his. But between him and that bliss stood a hated fiend, and that fiend was now sitting by her side inhaling her very breath, hearing the pulsation of her heart, banqueting on the view of charms, which only shone at times on earth, like some meteor in the heavens, to show how near that Nature could approach in her attempt to form an angel.

In the midst of these feelings, which in their nature were nearer allied to heaven than earth, as far as the presence of a beloved object could impart them,

there was one, which on a sudden seemed to oppress him with an unusual weight ; and that arose from the idea, that his immediate presence, and in such close association as in the adjoining box, was evidently regarded by Lady Amelia with the most positive indications of alarm ; for the purpose, therefore, of ensuring her peace, he considered that it was incumbent on him to betake himself to some other part of the theatre. It was evident to him that the part which Lady Amelia and Julia had to act was one of great difficulty and perplexity. They were prevented by the presence of Sir Henry Montfort from entering into any conversation with him, or in fact of taking even the most distant notice of him ; Fitzallan, therefore, saw at once the painful situation in which they were placed ; and, bowing respectfully to them, retired from the box.

There was, however, an eye in another part of the theatre, which, from his entrance into it, had been incessantly fixed upon him ; and he was standing in the lobby, irresolute whether to return home or to stop to witness the performance, when he was accosted by one of his acquaintance, informing him, that a seat in Mr. Gordon's box was much at his service, and that it would be particularly agreeable to Miss Gordon if he would join their party.

There are periods in life in which we act from the sudden impulse of the moment, without giving ourselves time to reflect how far the decision to which we then arrive is compatible with our happiness, or conducive to the promotion of our interests. Fitzallan may be said at this moment to have had little

or no control over himself; his ideas were all in confusion; but still we draw no caricature of human nature when we say, that in the moments of our greatest greatness, when we fancy that we are actually standing on the apex of human perfection, we are generally at the very base of it. We know the motive which swayed the breast of Fitzallan to accept of the invitation of the Gordons without apparently a moment's hesitation, and we do not shrink from avowing that Fitzallan in this instance exhibited himself in the true character of man; that is, that although in the possession of many eminent virtues, he is not without his corresponding share of vices; or which, in indulgence, we ought, *à la façon de nos frères nouvellistes*, to designate, considering that it is our hero who exhibits them, as common excusable weaknesses. Oh! there is something irresistibly captivating in the idea, and it is one which may be considered as almost indigenous to the female character, to excite a spirit of jealousy in a heart where an unequivocal proof of love has displayed itself, and actuated by a malicious spirit, by no means very laudable, to play the part of a tormentor, little thinking at the time how deep the wound may be that such conduct may inflict.

The box which Adeline Gordon occupied was exactly opposite to that which was honoured by containing the person of Sir Henry Montfort, Baronet, &c. &c. &c.; and no new elected city churchwarden at his first parochial dinner, when he astounds his auditors with his eulogiums on the *viteness* of the *weal*, the flavour of the *wenison*, or the *wery winous*

flavour of the *vines* ; no alderman at his inauguration dinner, the prelude to his assumption of his magisterial duties and to the enviable occupation of deciding, in the elevated chair of the mansion-house, the difficult and knotty point of the affiliation of an unfortunate illegitimate ; no author, who, perhaps, seated in the very box then occupied by Sir Henry Montfort, sees the ominous green curtain drop, whilst the house is in an uproar of applause at the intrinsic excellence of the first-born bantling of his genius ; not one of these three celebrated characters (for are they not all celebrated in their peculiar department ?) could possibly deport himself with greater dignity and self-complacency than did Sir Henry Montfort, seated as he then was between two glowing beauties, and one of them, one of the most splendid, the most angelic of her sex. Wherever female beauty is, there will the eye be attracted, and perhaps, had nature selected two of her most favourite master-pieces, who, in form, in make, in shape, in every thing which is supposed to constitute the standard of feminine beauty, were to exhibit on earth the type of the inhabitants of heaven, she could not, perhaps, have selected two more fitted for her purpose than Amelia Fortescue and Adeline Gordon ; and never did the heart of the latter beat with prouder emotions, mixed with all the malice of her sex, when she found Fitzallan seated by her side, and ever and anon saw the look of her hated rival directed towards her, with all the scorn and contempt which are so natural to the female, when she fancies that another has robbed her of her lover. If it were possible to establish a scale of hatred, and to fix the

maximum at 100, the degree at which the hatred of a girl for her rival would stand would be 99. Whether it had risen to that height in the breast of Amelia Fortescue for Adeline Gordon, or *vice versâ*, of Adeline Gordon for Amelia Fortescue, can only be decided by those who are greater adepts than ourselves in analyzing the female character, but so far we are enabled to state upon the most unquestionable authority, that when Lady Amelia directed her eyes to the box in which sat Adeline Gordon, and saw by her side Hector Fitzallan, apparently in the enjoyment of the most confidential intercourse, a feeling very nearly akin to the 99th degree of hatred did certainly arise in her breast, and if the power had then been invested in her, she would undoubtedly have sent the said Adeline Gordon to be the companion of Proserpine in a certain place, of which our forefathers have told us much; with the horrors of which the Methodists, Calvinists, and Independents of the present day frighten us most abominably; and respecting the site of which, the same liberal and enlightened trio are as much divided in their opinions, as they are regarding the most direct and convenient road to another place directly opposite.

We believe it is not necessary to repeat, that we are decidedly opposed to the deification of Mr. Hector Fitzallan, although we are not so ignorant of the heathen mythology, as not to know that many ladies and gentlemen of the olden times, have been promoted to the rank of goddesses and gods for far less virtue than the hero of this tale has exhibited; therefore, in accordance with that principle we will

represent Fitzallan as a mere human creature, with some of the faults natural to that species of animal, but which the *scavans* of the age confidently expect to see greatly modified in proportion as the millenium approaches, and all of which is to be effected by the power of sectarianism, proselytism, prayer-meetings, love-feasts, and steam.

Had Fitzallan at this particular juncture of his life been under the influence of a noble and generous spirit, he would, perhaps, have forbore to inflict the slightest degree of pain on the heart of Lady Amelia, by any studied display of attention or of familiarity towards Adeline Gordon, but if a conspiracy had been entered into between him and his lovely companion to devise the most effectual scheme for rousing all the jealousy so natural to the female, a more efficient one could not have been adopted than that which was practised on this occasion. In fact, the extreme familiarity, the freedom from all restraint, the jocularity, and the many proofs of kindness, which Fitzallan displayed towards his companion, was in some degree an enigma to Adeline herself, especially in the presence of one before whom it would have been expected that he would have been particularly guarded in his conduct, and have abstained from the commission of any act, which was in the least liable to give offence. It was, however, a mood of which Adeline knew well how to take every advantage. She met the familiarity of Fitzallan by a corresponding spirit, and she threw over the whole of her demeanour such an air of fascination, which added to the power of her superlative beauty, would have entranced any

youthful heart which was not preoccupied, and even to some hearts in that situation, the trial would have been one of the greatest severity. Adeline Gordon, however, was now in her glory; she beheld herself in a situation, which of all others, she had most anxiously looked for; she saw herself the selected companion of the only individual on whose heart it was her secret desire to make an impression, and that too in the public presence of one in whose breast she had every reason to believe there glowed the fire of a secret love. In regard to the scenes of the drama, which were then enacting before them, neither Adeline nor Fitzallan appeared to pay the slightest attention, so completely did they seem absorbed in the subject of their conversation; and from some cause not difficult to be accounted for, Sir Henry Montfort was frequently obliged to rouse one of his fair companions from a kind of abstraction of thought into which she had fallen, in order to induce her to pay even the slightest attention to the illusion which was passing before her.

The conversation which had hitherto passed between Adeline Gordon and Fitzallan was of that light and frivolous character, which, in the refined and polished circles, is known by the appellation of small talk, in which a number of words are pronounced, but from which little or no sense at all can be extracted. On a sudden, as if by the mere impulse of the moment, and without any premeditated design, she asked, "Have you seen Monckton to-day?"

"I have no particular desire," said Fitzallan, "to seek the society of Mr. Monckton."

“He was taken most completely by surprise, to-day,” said Adeline; “he was playing a game of chess with me when his servant came in a great hurry, announcing the arrival of his father.”

“Of Lord Dufresne!” exclaimed Fitzallan, under the most visible emotion of surprise.

“The same,” answered Adeline; “and I can assure you, his unexpected arrival gave no little uneasiness to Monckton.”

“Have you seen Monckton since his interview with his father?” asked Fitzallan.

“I have not,” answered Adeline, “and I am very anxious to see him, as I am certain the visit of his father must have been occasioned by some business of the most urgent necessity, or otherwise, I do not think that Monckton would have broken his engagement to attend me to the theatre this evening.”

Fitzallan sank into a train of reflections not of the most pleasing nature, and which involved him in an embarrassment which was too visible in the whole of his manner to escape the penetrating eye of Adeline. It was then actually Lord Dufresne, thought Fitzallan to himself, from which it is certain that some connexion subsists between him and my mother; and then his imperative injunction, as if it were the mandate of a parent: hence, perhaps, the existing cause for all the mystery and secrecy that have been observed. These ideas passed in such rapid succession across his mind, that he could not fix upon any individual one which could lead him to a decisive result. Project after project arose in his head, but each was rejected to make way for one more preposterous and extravagant than

the former ; at all events he determined on the following morning to discover the residence of Lord Dufresne, with the hope of inducing him, now that he had arrived at his real name and station, to enter into a more explicit explanation of the particular relation in which he stood with his mother.

The drama had now lost all interest for Fitzallan, that is, if it ever possessed any, for his mind was so engrossed with other subjects, that if Pasta had been warbling her heavenly strains, or Taglioni, redolent of grace, that goddess of our Terpsichorean adoration, had been bounding, fawn-like over the stage, he would, perhaps, have heeded them not. Adeline also expressed herself tired with the scene, and proposed returning home, inviting Fitzallan to take his supper with her. He cast one look towards the box in which Lady Amelia was sitting, but she was at that moment attending to some remark of her most sensible and instructive companion, and in a few moments after he left the theatre.

But how are we to account for the sudden paleness which came over the countenance of Lady Amelia, when on directing her look to the box, formerly occupied by Fitzallan, she saw it deserted ? to what cause is to be attributed the dizziness which on a sudden afflicted her ? or the mist which swam before her vision, rendering every object that was before distinct and clear, confused and undefined ? The change which her countenance underwent was too decidedly apparent not to attract the notice of Julia, and without stopping to inquire the cause, or raising that bustle and fluster which certain officious ladies are too apt

to do in similar occasions, laying every smelling bottle or vinaigrette under contribution that is to be found within the sphere of their reach, or making those heavy drains upon the tanks and reservoirs in the neighbourhood, as if the sufferer were in a state of conflagration, and the aid of one of Hadley and Simpkins's engines was requisite to extinguish it. Julia Manners, who suspected the cause of Lady Amelia's embarrassment, advised her immediate retirement from the theatre, alleging to Sir Henry, that it was a matter past all doubt that the heat of the theatre was by far too great for her Ladyship to support. Sir Henry declared that he had himself found the theatre excessively hot, and therefore, it was by no means wondrous that 'Lady Amelia should also have experienced the same injurious effects. The fresh air, Sir Henry thought, might be of great advantage to her, or, perhaps, a little vinegar, or the smoke of a piece of brown paper ; but Lady Amelia was herself very soon able to inform the Baronet, that she begged leave to dispense with any of his specifics ; for that it was merely a temporary matter, an affair scarcely worthy of any notice. Sir Henry was, however, fully convinced that he was imperiously called upon to interfere in a case of this sort, and consequently, that it was a part of his duty to order the carriage to stop at the first apothecary's, in order that a supply of the necessary restoratives should be obtained in case of a relapse ; a thing, he said, by no means uncommon, nor of rare occurrence, according to the extent of his own experience, nor could all the protestations of Lady Amelia, nor the arguments of

Julia, convince him that he had formed a wrong estimate of the affair, and that he had in reality clothed it with an importance which it did not deserve. *Coûte qui coûte*, the carriage was ordered to stop, but, unfortunately for Lady Amelia, the fates seemed to have entered that evening into a conspiracy how far they could put her feelings upon the rack, and bring an anguish over her heart, which being obliged to bear in secret, becomes at last too intense to be supported. Opposite to the elaboratory in which Sir Henry had entered with all the bustling consequence of the most pressing exigency, stood the residence of Adeline Gordon. The night was beautifully serene ; the windows of the drawing-room were open ; Lady Amelia heard the voice of Fitzallan, accompanying himself on the piano-forte, singing one of her most favourite airs, and one which to her was peculiarly dear, as from his lips she first had heard it ; she could see Adeline sitting by his side, in all the happy confidence of a reciprocal affection, one of her arms was resting on his shoulder, and strange and cold must have been the feelings of that man who would not have kissed the hand that hung so near to his lips. Whether Fitzallan did in reality kiss that hand is one of those secrets in his life, which we are not authorized at present to divulge ; at all events, of one thing we are certain, that if he did not kiss it, he would stand depreciated in the opinion of ninety-nine out of a hundred of the female readers of his eventful life. Whatever may have been the scene, which Lady Amelia witnessed, it is, however, certain that by the time when Sir Henry re-entered the carriage with his

chosen collection of restoratives, the individual for whom they were intended was actually more in need of them than at any other previous period of the night. Nature will, however, sometimes step in with its benevolent aid, and in a moment when the heart is ready to break, will call forth into action some dormant passion, which for a time bears the ascendancy, and gives the sufferer a momentary triumph. Pride ! thou art a power that achievest wonders ; by thy secret agency, thou canst give spirit to the weak, resolution to the wavering, and when despair with its sickly brood surrounds us, thou comest forth as some commanding genius, and with thy torch on high ledest us to brighter and to fairer scenes.

“ Then be it so,” said Lady Amelia to herself, “ he loves another ; then henceforth I’ll think no more of him. I’ll tear his image from my breast, and be unto myself as if it never existed there. He thinks me unworthy of him, he is now breathing his vows of unalterable love to another ; then will I show him how soon a woman’s love can turn to hate, how far she can so alter her being, that all things become changed to her, and every thing which bears a reference to an object once beloved, and which in other hours might have been prized with all the holy fervour of the pilgrim for his sainted relic, shall sink as a worthless, valueless bauble to be thrown away with all the indifference of the child for its mutilated puppet.”

So thought Lady Amelia to herself, and so accordingly did Lady Amelia determine to act. But she is not the first by many thousands of the lovely

daughters of Eve, who have formed similar resolutions when they have laid their head upon their pillow, and when the light of the morning has broken upon them, have held those resolutions as a dream, and as a dream have forgotten them. In the mean time, however, these very wise and laudable resolutions had the desired effect, for Sir Henry had no occasion for the application of any of his restoratives; and on the arrival of the party at home they were consigned to the care of the footman, to be by him consigned to the care of the housekeeper, and by her to be kept in readiness whenever Sir Henry should have occasion to call for them.

CHAPTER XX.

It roll'd within an orb of love,
Where light seem'd like a gleam of joy,
And brilliancy was soften'd down,
By something kind, and something coy.
But sometimes tears, like summer's rain,
Responded there to pity's sigh;
Till pleasure lighted up again
The glory of her hazel eye.

AND Adeline Gordon sat with her arm on the shoulder of Fitzallan; and now that there is no Lady Amelia Fortescue as a secret witness to suffer by the truth which we are obliged to tell, let it be confessed, that Fitzallan did take the hand, which, like a tempting fruit, hung before him, and that he did imprint on it a kiss, as warm, as fervent, and as ardent as ever burned on lover's lips before. We have reason to believe, that considering the high and laudable strain of morality, decorum, and propriety by which these pages have been hitherto distinguished, that consistently with the example of all those who have travelled the road of human life before us, we ought, on account of such act having been committed by Fitzallan, and at that bewitching hour when passion sometimes will speak in despite of all the intrusions and interruptions of prudence and of prudery, to have represented Adeline as bouncing from

her chair, her cheeks flushed with indignation at such a gross and unwarrantable attack on her virtue, her hair thrown into confusion by the agency of her digits acting in the capacity of carding combs, her pulse suddenly starting to a hundred and twenty-five, and as audible as the pizzicato movements on Paganini's violin, her whole frame in the tremulous motion of a mass of blancmange, the ligature of her stays bursting with a crack similar to that of the cable of a man of war in a storm, the kerchief of her bosom so displaced that a glimpse of those yielding orbs is obtained, which should only be allowed to the invisible spirit of her morning dreams ; these, and many other well known insignia of a woman's counterfeit rage on similar occasions might have been given with all the accuracy of an historical narrative, until we had arrived at that grand climax, when the poor unfortunate falls upon the sofa in a most alarming hysterical fit, from which we know some ladies have felt a great reluctance to recover on account of the arms by which they have felt themselves embraced, and by which they have been so very feelingly supported in their apparently helpless and unconscious state.

It happened, however, that Adeline Gordon, from, let it be supposed, a positive ignorance on her part, did not perform one single act of the drama which has just now been laid down as the usual practice on such occasions. She did not even give Fitzallan that expressive and seductive tap on the cheek, accompanied with the usual exclamation of—Oh ! fie, you naughty man ! but she gave him in return such a smile, and such a look, that had his heart been an

iceberg it would have thawed it ; and in that moment Fitzallan was convinced of the truth, that the boasted wisdom and virtue of man are things of an unsubstantial and baseless nature, when they have to contend against the all-powerful influence of feminine beauty. Perhaps in no moment of their previous intercourse did Adeline ever appear so bewitchingly beautiful as in the present one ; her whole form seemed to breathe voluptuousness and desire ; her every action betrayed the existence of an internal fire, consuming the object by which it was fed, and diffusing its influence wherever a portion of inflammable matter was to be found. To say that the heart of Fitzallan was wholly destitute of any portion of that inflammable matter were wholly to belie its nature ; but there are occasions in which the ignition takes place with greater rapidity and strength than in others, which occasions depend on a certain combination of circumstances, which must have been so well known and felt by every youth who has attained the age of twenty, as not to require in the present instance any particular mention to illustrate the position. The only question therefore now to be decided is, whether such a combination of those circumstances did actually take place in this interview between Fitzallan and Adeline ; and if decided in the affirmative, the consequence must naturally follow, that the image of Amelia Fortescue, deeply as it might be supposed to be engraven on his heart, was for the time slightly effaced, and that he became a willing slave to the fascination of the transcendent beauty, which was so lavishly spread before him.

It was an hour which would for ever have decided the fate of Fitzallan, and have bound him for the remainder of his life in the tyrant chains of one of the most dangerous of her sex, but that there was a form which ever and anon presented itself to his imagination, seeming to beckon him away, and with an angel smile to lure him from his destruction. Adeline seated herself on the sofa, taking in her hand one of those costly *mélanges*, ycleped an Annual, when, turning over some of the leaves, she exclaimed, "Is not this a beautiful design of Corbould's?"

How was Fitzallan to judge of the beauty of the design without an inspection of it? and how was that inspection to be obtained, without placing himself in a proper and convenient position? and what position could possibly be more convenient and proper than by the side of the individual, who had challenged his critical powers on so scientific a subject? Accordingly he did seat himself by her side, and the merits of Corbould's design were entered into, although neither of them cared a tittle about it, and in reality knew not in what particular its merits were to be looked for.

We have lived long enough in, and have seen enough of the world to know that there are many ill-natured, waspish, crabbed individuals in it, a caste particularly abounding amongst the sexagenarian virgins, alias old maids, who are prone to put an evil construction upon every act committed by a girl of twenty; and who, judging from their own feelings, (in their own opinion the most infallible criterion of

human judgment,) consider that the aim of every female through life has but *one* point, and that on the manner in which that point is gained, depends her claim to respectability and to esteem. It may therefore happen that a very illiberal construction may be put upon the invitation which Adeline gave to Fitzallan to inspect the beauty of Corbould's design; and certainly, if the fact be taken into consideration—that Fitzallan had no sooner taken his seat, and given a cursory glance upon the picture than the book was thrown aside, as if it were of no further use, we must in candour confess, that we cannot look upon the question of Corbould's design in no other light than as one raised on a sudden by the prolific fancy of the beautiful girl to mask her real design, thereby to bring the beloved youth and herself in a state of immediate juxtaposition, and by the power of contact to strike into his heart some flashes of that electrical fire, by which all nature is animated, and to which all creation owes its origin.

The female who has mingled in the world, and has never been exposed to the ordeal of one of those dangerous hours, from which so many of her sex too often date their future misery, must be either in her constitution similar to a senseless, inanimate clod; an oyster in her affections, or a biped polypus in her love; or she must be one of those extraordinary compositions of nature, which now and then do emerge from her great workshop, and in the formation of which it has been forgotten to intermix certain ingredients, in the absence of *one* of which, the female is a mere automaton, a kind of stalking

windmill without any sails, a nonentity, a nullity, a nothing.

It may be stated, without any fear of contradiction, that Adeline did not belong to either of those classes of cold-blooded beings; for nature in her composition had incorporated a double portion of her elemental fire, and she covered that fire with an exterior so nearly approaching to whatever the human mind can conceive of feminine beauty, that to attempt to resist it with the hope of victory, were equal to the struggle of the pigmiest of the pigmies against one of those formidable giants of old, with whom to establish a new race of human beings on the earth, we are told the angels travelled post from heaven.

It was night; and in that one word how much is centred, when a scene is to be depicted between two such human beings as Adeline Gordon and Hector Fitzallan; and when silence, the twin-sister of night, comes with her aid to give to their feelings a resistless force, and by their confederated power to fill the heart with ecstasies, which in heaven's bounty are given to man, to make this earth to him a paradise.

Their conversation at the outset took a desultory turn, touching on topics of no general interest, and in which the affections of the heart were no more concerned, than whether the wind blew from the east or the west; or whether an illegitimate sprig of royalty had been surreptitiously engrafted on the ancient trunk of British nobility. It is, however, by no means improbable, that subjects of the latter import might for a time have engrossed their attention,

as they must naturally excite surprise in every breast, in which the slightest sense of decorum, propriety, or rectitude of conduct may be supposed to exist.

It is by no means a difficult task to trace the associations of the human mind, and especially in that of a female one, when the aim is to create a direct allusion to some overpowering passion, and particularly if that passion be of the heart. The opportunity which Adeline had so long sought for—to which all her plans and schemes were immediately directed, and which may be designated as the *ultima* *thule* of all her wishes, had now arrived. She had by her side the individual on whom in secret she had fixed her affections, and to gain which in return she had used all the artifices, stratagems, and wiles, which the most inventive of her sex could have devised, and which few but herself would have had the spirit to execute. Adeline was by no means ignorant of the particular mode of deportment in which all the power of the female is supposed to exist, and she also knew that there is not any thing more repellent, nor less likely to effect the desired end than a bold and forward carriage, which gives the female the character rather of the attacker than the attacked. A woman to be won ought to be wooed; a woman who is won without wooing may enchain and enrapture us for the moment, but it is a species of intoxication, the excitation of which having subsided, leaves disgust and aversion in its place. The contest which a woman fights differs from all others, on the principle that she conquers by retreating; but when she commits so great an error as to act upon the offensive,

the object of her desire generally runs away from her, and is lost altogether in the pursuit.

It cannot, however, have escaped the observation of those who have been accustomed to trace the coincidence of circumstances, that a trifle will sometimes bring about an event, which the most studied industry, and the most indefatigable skill have failed to produce. The hand of Adeline was lying carelessly in her lap, when Fitzallan took hold of it, requesting permission to examine a beautiful ring, which adorned one of her fingers; and, after looking at it for some time, he said, "How highly favoured must that individual be whose hair is enclosed in that ring!"

"However high may be the estimation in which I hold him," said Adeline, "to him it is of little value."

"He must be a singular compound of frigidity and folly," said Fitzallan.

"Not so," said Adeline; "but there are some hearts which are as impervious to the influence of love, as marble to the beam of the sun."

"Does that heart beat in this world," asked Fitzallan, "which could close itself against a love like yours? Can such a mass of inanimate matter be found in the human shape, which would not be exhilarated with a fresh life, to hear from lips like yours the sound of love?"

"I do not believe," said Adeline, "that the heart to which I allude is one either of apathy or coldness; but I have reason to suspect that the impression of another love has been stamped upon it. Mine there-

fore is obliged to burn like the vestal lamp, known only to its votary; and it will one day expire with the power that fed it."

"But not, I hope," said Fitzallan, "until it has burned with redoubled brightness in sweet communion with another flame."

"That is no hope of mine," said Adeline; "it might once have animated my heart, but every day, even this very moment, confirms me in the belief, that were I to confess my love, it would meet with no return."

"Surely the present moment," said Fitzallan, rather significantly, "cannot have any reference to your love?"

"Perhaps no more," said Adeline, "than that the hair, which this ring encloses once belonged to you; both may have the same foundation in truth."

"The case is possible," said Fitzallan, "but very far beyond the range of probability; indeed, judging from circumstances, I should consider it but one step removed from the impossible."

"Is not that the case," asked Adeline, "with every incident? you cannot define to me the bounds where probability ends, and impossibility begins."

"But in the present instance," said Fitzallan, "your comparison has not the slightest ground of probability in it. To suppose, for a moment, that the hair, which that ring contains, once was mine, is one of those cases which stand on the very verge of improbability."

"And yet," said Adeline, with a most expressive look, "it is not impossible."

“ I grant that position,” said Fitzallan ; “ but to suppose that Miss Adeline Gordon would so far condescend as to place any value on a few hairs belonging to so humble an individual as myself ; and still more, to wear them on her person as the remembrance of a beloved being, speaks at once its almost demonstrable impossibility.”

“ Does not the hair resemble yours in colour ?” asked Adeline.

“ That is far from any proof,” said Fitzallan ; “ it is the colour of thousands besides myself.”

“ But perhaps you will tell me how you would act under the following circumstances,” said Adeline, rising from the sofa, and taking something out of a small casket which stood upon the table ; “ this ring is the counterpart of that which I wear, and contains a lock of my own hair. Now, supposing you were the individual whom I loved, and thus,” taking the hand of Fitzallan, “ I were to place the ring upon your finger, and bid you wear it as the remembrance of an ill-requited love, how, under those circumstances, would you act ?”

A sudden light burst upon the astonished mind of Fitzallan : he was in the presence, and under the irresistible influence of one of heaven’s masterpieces of feminine beauty ; his eye banqueted on a bosom formed in Nature’s most perfect mould ; he was inhaling her very breath ; his ear could catch the irregular throbbings of her heart ; he felt himself spell-bound, as if he stood in the magic circle of some potent magician, and the next moment was to decide the destiny of his life. His hand was still encircled

in that of Adeline ; the ring was on his finger, he feared to speak, nor in his confusion did he dare to raise his look, to encounter one, which would at once have broken the spell, and laid him prostrate at the feet of the enchantress. But still there was a deep ambiguity in her expression ; he might have mistaken her meaning ; he might have applied that to himself, which in reality had not the slightest reference to him ; and how highly ridiculous would he then appear in her eyes, to imagine himself the object of her love, when as yet her words had been so purely enigmatical, that he might have put whatever construction he pleased upon them, being equally expressive the one way as the other. In this state of contradictory feeling, in this whirl of passion, when self-control has lost its power, and man is impelled to and fro like the down blown from the thistle's head, without being able to fix upon any settled mode of action, Fitzallan, as if by some involuntary motion, pressed the hand of Adeline. In a moment their looks met each other ; and in those looks what language was not conveyed !—they spoke not ; words appeared to be a profanation of their feelings ; and, like those two Indian deities, who, in the early, youthful, and guiltless age of nature enjoyed each other by the fire of their eyes ; so did the eyes of Adeline and Fitzallan express in the most intelligible manner all desires, questions, answers, prayers, and protestations.

It was a moment, which those who have happily known, engrave on their memory never to be obliterated but with the last gasp of life ; but it was a

moment—and the next—with what might it not be fraught? they might start as from a trance, roused by the knell of their terrestrial happiness.

“Fitzallan,” cried Adeline, suddenly collecting herself, and throwing over her whole manner a bewitching tenderness, “the world with its cold and chilling ceremonies, with its fictitious restraint upon the most heavenly feelings of our nature, and with its hypocritical disguise of those emotions, which form the bliss of life, may, in its uncompromising severity, condemn the girl, who dares to let the confession escape her lips, that her heart is vivified with the flame of love; but, I—I hold the opinion of the world as naught when I have my God as my acquitting judge; now, Fitzallan, that moment of my life is arrived when I will confess my love; that love, which, like the sun, has burned, although a world has shaded it. This ring upon my finger, Fitzallan, contains your hair; by what stratagem I obtained it, I will not now disclose. Start not at the avowal, scorn not the tear which this confession brings into my eye; but, no, I will not speak it; yet my lips shall tell it;” and on the lips of Fitzallan she stamped her virgin kiss of love.

Fitzallan swam in a delirium of passion; a heart of marble would have been softened; a rock would have acquired life and feeling; the head of Adeline rested on his shoulder; her arm was around his neck; the image of Amelia Fortescue vanished from his imagination; he saw, he knew, he felt only Adeline Gordon; he bent his head, and the kiss of love was returned.

“Then art thou mine,” faintly whispered Adeline, and a tear rolled down her cheek; he kissed it off; he felt as if there were a fire within it that burned his lips; never in any previous moment did Adeline appear more beautiful to him, dissolving in his arms in all the fulness of a life-blood passion.

“Oh heavens!” exclaimed Fitzallan, “spare me, Adeline, I conjure you spare me;” the image of Amelia Fortescue flitted before his heated fancy. “No, no, I cannot—dare not love you.”

“Dare not!” cried Adeline, with all her natural pride and dignity, “where is the individual who shall dare to step in with his authority between us, and with his pigmy power presume to control our affections? lives there that being upon the earth, whose mandate can separate two hearts bound by a chain forged by the omnipotence of love? it may sound well in some fable told by some grandame in the nursery; but to souls like ours, it would be a tale as credible, as if it were bruited, that this great universe had swung from off its hinges, and was roaming unchecked, free from its Maker’s hold. But you cannot love me? speak, dwells there then the image of some other being in your heart? and am I then doomed to know that deepest of all miseries, the existence of a rival?”

“To deny that I do love another,” said Fitzallan, “were at variance both with truth and candour, but a few days will, perhaps, see her the bride of another, and my love then will be like a flame that burns in sepulchres, a lonely, cheerless light.”

“Then!” exclaimed Adeline, “oh! thou blessed

hope, Fitzallan may still be mine ; that hope shall be the spirit of my midnight thoughts ; the first bright vision of my morning dreams. My rival may surpass me in beauty, in fortune, in accomplishments, but there is one thing in which she is and ever will be my inferior, she never can love as I do. I know my heart, and you, Fitzallan, will one day learn to know it ; then tell me what course will you pursue with a woman, who would follow your footsteps with the most ardent love, with the most unextinguishable affection, to the very centre of the earth ; who, throwing aside all the reserve and modesty of her sex, would drag you from the embraces of a favoured rival, and with her arms around your neck defy all power to wrest you from her ?”

“ *Once* only,” said Fitzallan, “ does the flower of love bloom in life in all its heavenly beauty, if that be nipped untimely, the *second* flowering is, as if it were forced in a hothouse, weak and worthless, and its sole influence on the heart is to make us feel the loss of the former more acutely. Is the remembrance of a first love, Adeline, ever erased from the heart ?”

“ Never !” exclaimed Adeline ; “ and for that reason, my love for you will live with me for ever.”

At this moment, the mother of Adeline rushed into the room, and with the expression of fear on her countenance, informed Fitzallan, that a man of the most surly manners had that moment inquired if he were in the house, and on being answered in the affirmative, demanded an immediate interview with him. To every invitation to enter the house, he gave the most positive denial ; his business, he said,

would not occupy a minute, and in a peremptory tone demanded that Mr. Fitzallan should be instantly apprized that he was in waiting.

"A stranger!" exclaimed Fitzallan, "and inquiring for me here? that is extraordinary; how came he to know that I was here? are you acquainted, Madam, with his face or person?"

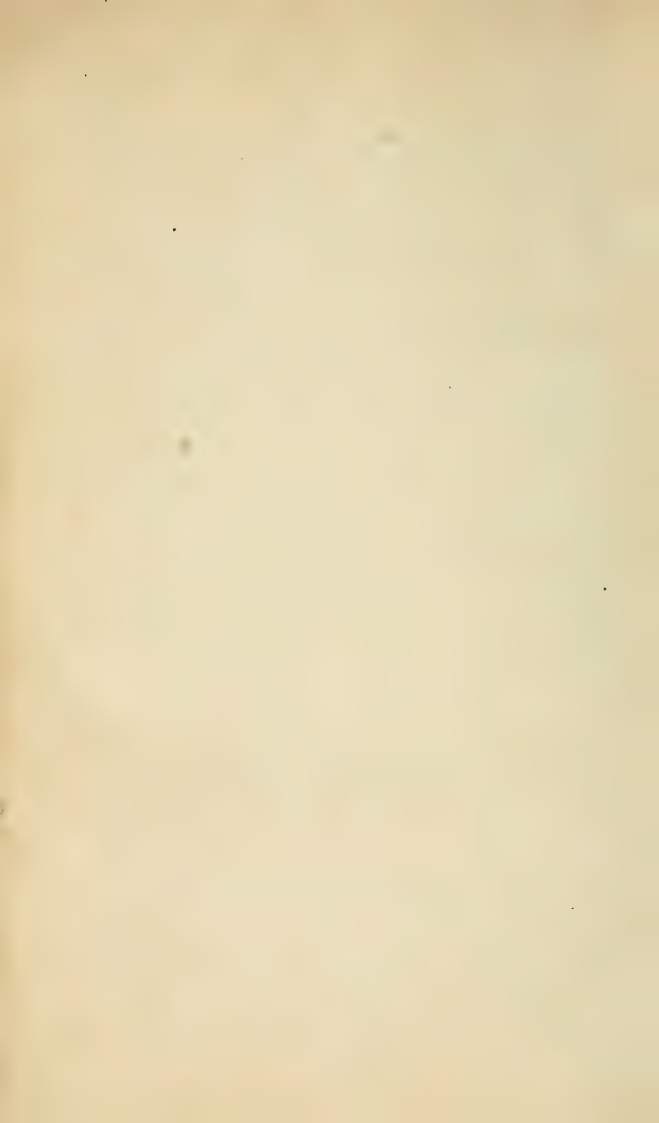
"Of the former," replied Mrs. Gordon, "I could not catch a glimpse, as he seemed anxious to conceal it in the folds of his cloak; the latter I cannot recall to my recollection ever having seen before."

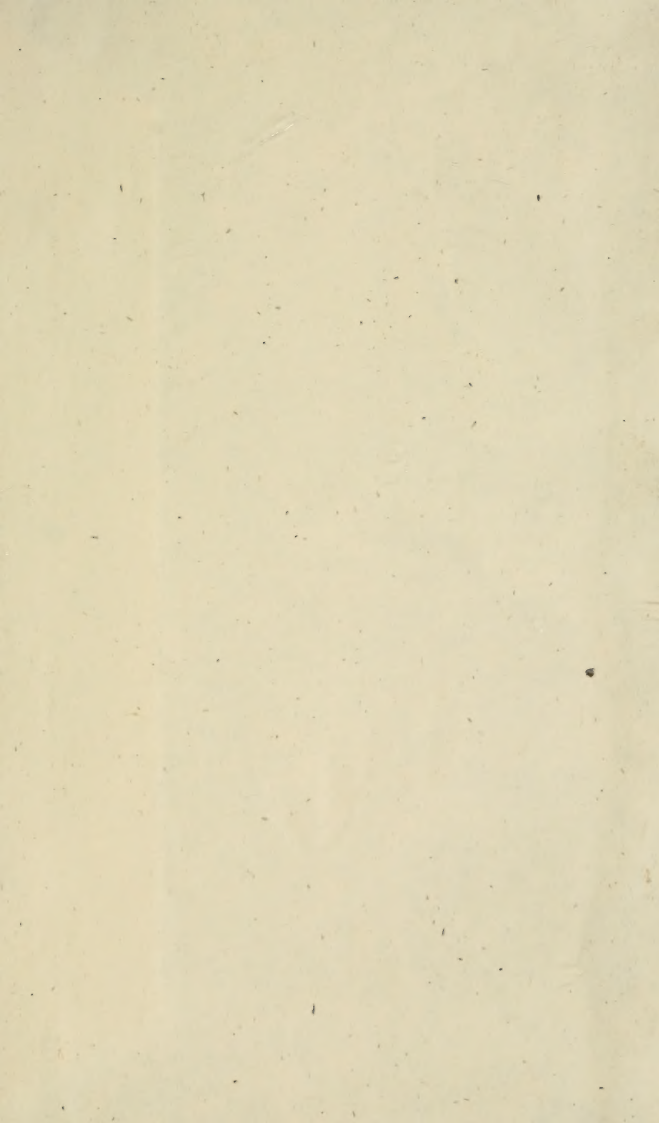
The countenance of Adeline assumed an ashy paleness; she appeared like some detected accomplice in a deed of guilt. Her perturbation, however, escaped the notice of Fitzallan, and although a most painful presentiment, for which he could not account, hung upon his mind, he descended the stairs leading to the hall, the door of which stood open, and where he expected to meet the stranger. No one, however, presented himself to his notice; he stood on the step, and as well as the obscurity of the night would allow him, he directed his eyes to every quarter, but not the slightest vestige of the stranger presented itself. In a few minutes he heard the sound of steps advancing, it was the watchman of the night, whom he immediately questioned, if he had seen a person lurking about, answering the description of the stranger as given by Mrs. Gordon. A decided negative was, however, given, and had Fitzallan been one of those weak-minded creatures, who have been so far misled by priests and old maids as to believe in apparitions, he would doubtless have conjectured, that Mrs.

Gordon had on that night been visited by one of those prowling gentry, to amuse her with one of their midnight pranks, before the crowing of the cock (thanks be for ever to St. Peter) drives them helter-skelter back to their very uncomfortable domicile.

Perplexed and surprised, Fitzallan returned to the drawing-room, but to his great wonder he found no one there ; in a few moments, however, Mrs. Gordon made her appearance, informing Fitzallan, that Adeline had been taken suddenly indisposed, and had retired to bed. Fitzallan had been absent but a very few minutes, he had left Adeline apparently in the enjoyment of the fullest health ; and whether it was his guardian angel who whispered it to him, or whether the thought arose spontaneously in his own breast, it is certain that a very strange suspicion darted across his mind, that there was more in this sudden illness of Adeline, than all his ingenuity could immediately solve, and so strong did the impression work upon him, that he very significantly, and in a manner which could not be misunderstood, expressed his great regret at the sudden indisposition of Miss Adeline, and taking his hat, bade Mrs. Gordon a good night.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





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